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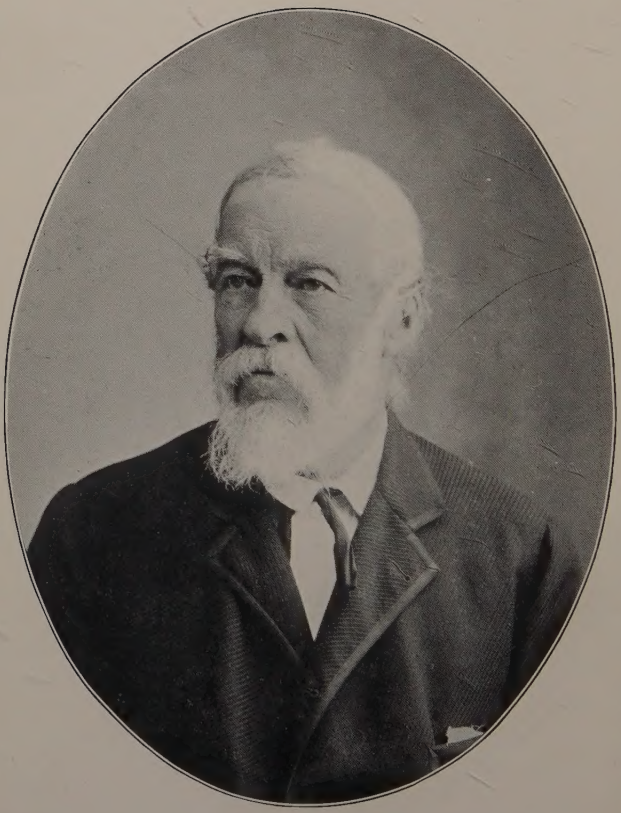

The Poet at 83

THE POEMS OF B. I. DURWARD

Illustrated Centenary Edition
1917

With Life and Criticism on Poetry

THE PILGRIM PUBLISHING CO.
John T. Durward
Baraboo, Wis.

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CONTENTS

MEMOIR—

	Page
Born, in Montrose, 1817	i
Married in Manchester, 1842	ii
Conversion to the Catholic Church, 1852	iv
Professor at St. Francis', 1854-1864	vi
Influence of Faith on Poetry	x
Sonnet Poetry	xxxii
Lyric Poetry	xxxiii
Didactic Poetry	xxxviii
Epic Poetry	xl
Died in 1902	xliv

EARLY POEMS—

First Love	1
Earth	4
Indian Summer	5
Twilight on the Milwaukee	6
Debtors	8
Sunset (1)	9
The Mother	10
The Mourning Dove	11
Winter	12
Flowers	15
Education	16
By the Rivulet	19
Nature	23
Autumn	24
Farewell to the Milwaukee	26

CONTENTS—Continued

	Page
The "Fourth"	28
To the Comet	29
Limbus Infantum	31
To a Bird in Church	33
I'll Weep No More	36
Aspiration	37
May	39
June	46
Pride	41
Sunset (2)	43
The Datura	45
The Sea Shell	46
A Wounded Dove	47
St. John Evangelist	48
Lake Monona	50
Twilight	51
The Absent One	52
Milwaukee Bay	54

PERSONAL ODES AND SONNETS—

Alan the Durward	57
To My Mother	58
Solomo	60
Burns	62
Scott	66
Campbell	69
To Father Marquette	72
To Charles Gifford	74
Grand Duke Alexis	76
Dawn	77
To Dr. Huntington	79
To Captain Barry	81
To My Firstborn	83
Emma Theresa	85

Page

Thecla 86
Aubrey de Vere 88
Coventry Patmore 89
Garcia Moreno 90
Alex Mitchell 91
J. H. Dahlman 92
Eliza Allen Starr 93
Genoa 94
On the Death of Judas 95

CHRISTINA 96-164

SONNETS OF DEVIL'S LAKE—

To Love 166
My Husband 166
The Elephant 167
The Precipice 167
Gratitude 168
Honeymoon 168
External Beauty 169
Dark Beauty 169
Soul Beauty 170
A Frown 170
Optimism 171
Simple Wants 171
Idolatry 172
Quartzite 172
The Last 173

LATER POEMS—

To the Wisconsin River 175
St. Mary's of the Pines 177
Minnehaha 181
Faith 182
Milwaukee 183
Grapes and Wine 184

CONTENTS—Continued

	Page
The Rainbow	189
Madonna of the Rose	190
St. John Baptist	191
Eclipse of the Evening Star	193
The Lady Elgin	194
Sunrise	196
Guardian Angel to a Soul	197
A Voice from Purgatory	200
Good, Better, Best	201
A Nuptial Mass	203
Time	204
To Erato	205
The Soul's Cross	206
Fate	207
Super Flumina Babylon's	208
When I the Light Shall Leave	209
A Chinese Fable	210
Rest and Pray	211
Peace	212
Heaven	213
Hopeless Love	214
Evening	215
Anti-Socialism	216
To the Blessed Virgin	217
Good Night	222
The Strong Man	224-250

Memoir

MEMOIR.*

Bernard Isaac Durward was born March 26th, 1817, in Montrose, Scotland, a town whose legend: MARE DITAT ET ROSA DECORAT, tells its industry and its picturesqueness. His father having been drowned while Isaac was a babe, his mother was so loath to wean him, her last of one daughter and four sons, that our poet in after life declared he remembered being suckled at her breast; and in memory of her he puts into another mother's mouth, the line, "I would that thou couldst milk me till I die!"

Being poor he earned his bread at the age of nine, herding sheep in sight of the Grampian Hills, from which and from the sea that twice a day fills the basin that serves as harbor to the shipping and mirror to the city's beauty, he drew the love of nature that later was to find expression in verse.

He was afterwards apprenticed and learned the shoemaker's trade. As each boy was required to show a certain amount of work at the end of the week, Isaac would toil like a galley slave the last three days to compensate for the hours he had given to the surreptitious study of history, poetry and the fiction that was then coming from his contemporary Scott, and others.

Prints were also borrowed from the Art School and copied, laying the foundation of the Art that was to be

*For much of what is best in this Memoir I am indebted to the Poet's fifth son, Wilfrid.—Ed.

his bread-winner—portrait painting. Although his people were Protestants he was not brought up in any religion. As every reader of "Quentin Durward" knows, the family was originally Catholic, and the *History of the Burgh of Montrose* records: "The Convent of St. Mary, East of Victoria bridge, was founded in 1230 by Alan the Durward, the most powerful Scotch Magnate of the time." Since the so-called Reformation the name has been spelled Dorward, but, going back to the old religion, Mr. Durward and his family took the more correct and euphonious spelling. It is remarkable, too, that one branch of the family—the Durwards of Deeside,—never changed the name and never deserted the Faith; the last member of this branch dying in 1915, a Monk at Fort Augustus, Scotland—Brother Nathlan, whose mother was a Mary Durward.

In 1842 he took up his residence in England, having married Miss Margaret Hilyard in the Episcopal Church in Manchester. He practiced his Art (chiefly in crayon, though later he adopted oil) and when sufficient money was earned he emigrated to Wisconsin, then a territory, bringing his wife and two sons born in England—Frederick (afterwards called Bernard), who died at Riverside, Milwaukee, and Percy, the future Artist, Charles.

He landed at the Milwaukee Docks, having come from New York by the lakes and canals, in the absence of railroads, with one English shilling to begin life on; but, nothing daunted, he followed a good looking merchant down what is now East Water Street and bargained to paint his portrait for a barrel of flour. Shades of Whistler and Sargent, take notice! This was in 1845.

He preempted land at $1.25 an acre in Dodge county, but Indians being then plentiful and Cooper's tales the popular reading, it was no place for a young wife and children, so he rented a house in Milwaukee; his profession also requiring the more populous locality.

In Milwaukee was born another son and called Emerson, in honor of our American man of letters, whose acquaintance Mr. Durward made and whose influence can be seen in the metre of "Curled Blue-eyed Mystery," written of little Emerson. But our poet felt the call of the wild beauty of the Milwaukee River, and bought a few acres about four miles upstream, where was born and died the first daughter, Emma Theresa. As at her death he had obtained another holding of four acres, still on the river, but nearer town, on which he was building the "Octogon log" house, the baby's funeral was by boat with interment on his own property.

This home is now well within the city and a children's play-ground, called Gordon Park. It was a lovely spot; forested with white beech trees with their triangular nutlets for winter eating, and the high, aristocratic insteps of their roots forming cavities for children's play-houses and stores. The Milwaukee River, which washed its foot, was transportation "in wicker-work canoe of birchen bark by red man made" to and from his studio in the City. Here was born another son, Alan (afterwards Rev. James of St. James, Minnesota). Here it was that he received the gift of Catholic faith. The death of the little daughter spoken of above probably turned his thoughts to eternity. The fine poem "To the Milwaukee River," indicates a relationship of events:

"But will remember, though thou cease to run,
That by thy side the great and blessed Creator
Took my sweet child, and gave—His only Son."

But under God it was also acquaintance with Catholics and a truer insight into religion that caused him to exchange an expurgated version of the beauty-loving atheism of Shelley for the old Faith of Quentin Durward, the Faith of the Catholic Church.

He had painted portraits of Solomon Juneau, first white man and first Mayor of Milwaukee, Byron Kilbourn and other early settlers, and was now commissioned by Joshua Hathaway to paint the donor's portrait, as also that of Right Rev. J. M. Henni, first Bishop of Milwaukee, for the State Historical collection at Madison. Thus he received his first impressions of Catholicity; or as a Scotch acquaintance jocosely remarked; "Oo, ay! we ken hoo it was; ye were sent to tak' the Bishop,—but the Bishop took you!" There was no struggle, no heroism in the change—it was simply the grace of God leading, as he writes:

Through the darksome ways of error,
* * * * * * *
From that terror,
By the hand of Mercy, lifted
Into light.

He can never have been an atheist. He wrote poems before his conversion and not one breathes of infidelity. The real poet, because a seer, necessarily writes from the highest standpoint, which is truth; so

even his earliest verses are Christian. We may say: As the True, the Beautiful, and the Good are but three aspects of the Creator apparent to us, a person may be led into the Church either by perceiving the truth of its teaching and appreciate later its beauty and moral qualities; or by recognizing its beauty and coming afterward to know it as true and good, or, he may be struck first by its exalted goodness—of morality, of sacraments and of holy lives—and conclude that it must consequently be true, and, on acquaintance, see that it is also beauty.

It was by the "Beautiful Gate of the Temple" that Mr. Durward entered, "made perfect" as was Marius the Epicurean, "by the love of visible beauty." What to some are the stumbling blocks in the way to Rome were to him the most convincing proofs of the Catholic Faith. The supremacy of the Pope he saw to be essential to the existence of a Church, as a head is necessary to every organism. "You have no *Pope* in your picture," was his criticism to an artist whose composition lacked a supreme unifying element. "The Real Presence in the Eucharist is the focus-point without which we could not have the perfect worship of God. He is everywhere; but, looking everywhere, we look nowhere—our gaze is dissipated." If the Blessed Sacrament is the highest assurance for true worship—worship in which body joins with spirit, as is meet—the sacrament of penance is the most perfect divinely-human device for morality, making a man know himself and giving him the longed-for "open confession," without danger of revelation, and the consolation of an authoritative pardon. One of his infidel Scotch friends was so struck by his praise of the confes-

sional that he contemplated introducing it into his family! himself to be Father Confessor! a position which, of course, he had no authority to assume. The formalism of the Mass, so offensive to the Puritan and the Quaker, he was artist enough to appreciate—(besides its essence of a sacrifice, and that the most perfect)—as the union of all artistic forms—acting, music, poetry.

Another trial was in store. His eldest son fell into a decline to which physicians could give no name, and died. This also was viewed as a thank-offering.

> Dear Firstling of my little flock
> In tribute to the Master paid.

In the first fervor of conversion there was thought of both parents joining a religious order; but priestly advice and common sense prevailed over religious enthusiasm, and there were the four children to be considered. At this period was written the poem, "My children are no longer mine," so complete was the renunciation that he was ready to make for the pearl of great price.

A compromise was found by the opening of St. Francis' Ecclesiastical Seminary, first in Milwaukee, soon moved to its permanent home at Nojoshing on the south point of Milwaukee Bay, now St. Francis. Here, in the scarcity of English-speaking men of education, Mr. Durward was welcomed as professor of Belles Lettres. Here he could devote his talents to God's work at the princely salary of $200.00 per annum! Having a family to provide for (two more sons, Wilfrid and Andrew, having arrived), he was obliged to eke this out by painting altar-pieces in oil, on holidays and Sundays; the professor of

Moral having decided that the exercise of the fine arts did not violate the law of Sabbath rest. So, changing the witches' prophesy into "Thou shalt have *priests* though thou be none," he became instrumental in the education of the clergy of the early days, and indeed, two of his own sons joined the ministry, and Mrs. Durward could give from her netting needles a lace peculiar to herself for albs and altars.

The joy of conversion is different from other joys; or, rather, it is the synthesis of many. The satisfaction of coming into a fortune, the pride in a position gained, the thrill of love returned, the tenderness of a reconciliation, the enthusiasm for a new truth discovered, all are in conversion. When the consciousness comes of there being a God who loves us, that I possess the very truth Eternal, everything in the world takes on a new significance and an infinite value. We see the same things, but they are transfigured; we have the same work to do, but its motives and ends are sanctified; we face the same difficulties, but they are somehow insignificant; our griefs are consoled, our joys chastened.

Early in 1853 he was received into the church by Bishop Henni, his wife following him, and the four boys were baptized. In his joy at the newly found faith he expected some compensating trial. "Of course," he used to say, "I looked for something poetic or sentimental. Lo! we were sent the Scotch itch!" Well does the writer of this remember how "the night was filled with music" of scratching, and, between times, the singing of the Latin church hymns which were a mine of new found beauty.

His sympathy with Priest life is well given in "The Soul's Cross." So true and beautiful did the faith appear that he thought he had but to reveal it to his relations and they too would enter the Church. But alas! for the obstinacy of the Scotch. None of his family became Catholics, though many of Mrs. Durward's relations did. He never exhibited such sadness as when his friend, Charles Gifford, brother of the celebrated artist, Sanford Gifford, was taken from life (perhaps through suicide) without becoming a convert, as was expected.

At St. Francis' Seminary he was obliged to fight a hard battle for the supremacy of the English language in the education of American priests. We find it hard to believe now that the saintly and scholarly Father Heiss was in the habit of saying, "English is no language." And that in an English-speaking country; that of the speech of the majority of the civilized world; that of the language of the greatest poet (their Germany having only one of even the third class—Goethe) and of the most perfect prosody the world has yet heard!*

When the Rector remarked to a visitor that Mr.

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*To one disposed to question this, I would offer the following observations: Hebrew poetry, as in the Song of Songs and the Psalms, is something quite different—it is more rhetoric than prosody, consisting of **parallelism of ideas**, which parallelism, however, ought to be shown to the eye by the printer,—as is done by Professor Moulton in his "Modern Reader's Bible."

The classical prosody of Greece and Rome is too artificial, depending on **quantity**, which destroys rhythm, except by using unnatural accent.

French is jerky and irregular, lacking dignity.

German words are harsh and the Teutonic ear (good at music) is apparently often satisfied with imperfect rhyme.

Although individual words are most musical in Italian and Spanish, the **collocation** of words is not equal to that of English verse, and where the Latin Church hymns rise to greatest beauty is exactly where they abandon the classical and conform to modern prosody.

Durward taught all the English branches from grammar down,—"from grammar *upward,* if you please," was the retort.

In those days, only Latin and theology were considered important. Literature, art, business training, and even eloquence were almost entirely neglected.

His readings of Shakespeare were an event among the drier classics and, though entirely free from the exaggerated elocution taught in schools today and the mouthing of the stage, were very impressive—giving one a higher estimate of the excellence of the poet of Stratford on Avon than any actor. Even at home he often read to his delighted family the greatest of the tragedies and other English literature.

There was a game devised by him that the company often played: One of the party would say, for instance: I have an idea in my mind that rhymes with *pate.* Then each one in turn was required to *describe, without naming,* what he thought might be the proposed word. "Is it the officer on a ship next to the captain?" "No! it is not *mate.*" "Is it the opposite of *love?*" "No! it is not *hate.*" "Is it a political division of a country?" "No! it is not *state.*" "Is it a river in flood?" "Yes, it is *spate.*" The play has large capabilities of exercise in perfect rhymes, in ability of description, and incidentally in an enriched vocabulary.

Mr. Durward painted in monochrome a wonderful Crucifixion for the Seminary chapel, and the "St. Francis" in the refectory is his work. He taught painting to the School Sisters of Notre Dame, recently established in Milwaukee under Mother Caroline Fries, a most re-

markable woman, and on her he wrote a poem, "To a Lady's Sleeve."

Of highest interest is the question, How did the new Faith affect his poetry? He had ever loved beauty, whether physical or moral. Though he probably wrote some of his finest poems before formally joining the Catholic Church, there is internal evidence that the most were written subsequent to conversion and show the influence of Catholic belief. "Beauty is truth, truth beauty," affirms Keats; and, like the astronomer "When a new planet swims into his ken" or "like stout Cortez" (which by the way should be Balboa; forgive me Keats!) gazing silent upon a peak of Darien," so would the discovery of Catholic Faith be a new field of beauty open to our poet—not alone of supernatural beauties—of "thoughts that wander up and down eternity"—but the beauties of nature take on a new radiance when "every forest bush is aflame with God" and every tree seems to exclaim "Holy! Holy! Holy!" Mr. Durward's highest delight was the preception of the correspondence of things earthly with those heavenly; of the natural with the supernatural; of the impress of God, yes! of the Trinity of God on all creation, patent to the spiritual vision, and so wonderfully brought out by Coventry Patmore in his "Religio Poetae" and by Mgr. John Vaughan in his "Thoughts for all Times."

One writes of him: "The religious exaltation of spirit touched his poetic work at once, lifting and etherializing his conceptions of the beautiful in nature, and glorifying the connection in which he bound them, with silken and golden bands, to things divine; and if the

poems are distinctly not hymns it is not because they do not breathe the very breath of devotion." The influence of religious thought is correspondingly seen in other poets. Henry Van Dyke says of Tennyson: "The one thing I hope you will feel in reading 'In Memoriam,' and the others grouped with it, is that they are real records of the moral conflict between doubt and faith, and that in this conflict faith has the victory. Could he have written anything of his best without that high faith in an immortal life which he has expressed in 'Vastness' and in that last, supreme, faultless lyric 'Crossing the Bar?' Can any man be a poet without faith in God and in his own soul?"

The poet's work is the interpretation of life and nature, not merely its portraiture or criticism, and if its relation to the higher life and the supernature is ignored how can it be the supreme interpretation? Poetry, doubtless, must be more than philosophy or theology. Art, to be excellent, must be great and beautiful truth, greatly and beautifully expressed. If either is lacking it is not supreme art. Each art will have it proper vehicle of form; massed anatomy in architecture, line in sculpture, color in painting, sound in music, words in literature. To prose expression poetry will add metre and rhythm, always and essentially, stanza and rhyme occasionally, which, if not essential, is always beneficial, when it does not hamper the thought; and especially to poetry below the very highest. Poetry unites many arts. While giving us mental pictures even surpassing the plastic arts, it adds the charm of music for the ear. The poet is there-

fore called a *singer*, and poetry to be fully appreciated *must be read out aloud*.

It is difficult to define in what the essence of real poetry consists. There must be creation,

"Where moving on the water God is heard;

Eternal Spirit with eternal Word."*

It must be instinct with imagination whose truth will life it above fancy; with passion cleansed by spirit-fire to prevent it groveling as mere appetite; and with emotion that is not hysterical sentimentality. Perhaps the only word that expresses the soul of poetry is *magic*—the white incandescence of genius, the lightning-flash revealing a thought whose three faces are Beauty, Truth, Goodness; Truth in the thought, beauty in the music of expression, goodness in the appeal to the affections. All will be found in every great work of art, but not all in the same degree, and in proportion as a person sees and appreciates each aspect will be his verdict of the work's excellence. Hence, the perplexing difference of opinion on the merits of art—and his is the truest judgment who has appreciated it in all aspects. Such will be the united judgment of the ages.

Today we have two schools; one asserting that it does not matter *what* is said, but *how* it is said. This gives us the Technists; of fine prosody, fitting rhythm, melodious words, ringing rhyme. To these belong of living poets Don Marquis, Shaemus O'Sheel, Alice Meynell, E. Sutton, and others. If to this perfection of

*Lionel Johnson, in preface to "Translations of Horace," which translations show how superior to prose renderings, even so good as Bryce's, are the verse translations of a poet.

technique is added imaginative and passionate beauty of thought (those mentioned above possess it), we will have great poetry. If truth be superadded, supreme poetry.

This exquisite technique is, alas! too often prostituted to the benefit of the mistiness of pantheism, the glorifying of uncertainty over faith, to the fetish of false liberty, to the blurred and obscure philosophy of Bergson. Sir Stephen E. de Vere well says: "Nothing can be strong or graceful or beautiful which is not intelligible and distinct; and this is as true in literature as in morals."

The second school, with Walt Whitman the protagonist, cares nothing for poetical form, rather scouts it; and while not giving us good prose (for that also has its excellent form), gives us a mongrel. "Get the names of all *insects* (?) and interweave a train of thoughts suitable," is Whitman's own recipe; and sometimes he forgets to add any suitable or beautiful thought, but most often utters a commonplace. And even where the sentiment is fine, most *vers libre* is not high art. "The oftener *vers libre* gets into print" says a recent writer, "the less likely are its makers to win the crown of bays." It is not the differing line length that is especially objectionable (for many stanza forms require that, and it even passes well in much of Patmore's and Don Marquis' verse); but the lawless casting away of form and rule, the throwing together of mere material, however excellent, the "ejaculations and barbaric yaups of Whitman," and his followers, Oppenheim, Amy Lowel, J. G. Fletcher and others.

Now, while we may have the form of a man (as in a statue) without a man, we can not have a man without the form of one. Everything must have form, and poetry must have beautiful form. If it have a beautiful idea without metre it may be called poetical prose, but only by an abuse of language can it be called poetry. It were well if we had special words to express the differences in written language,—words that would be understood in the same sense by all—words that would distinguish between poetry and prose, and between poetry and verse and doggerel. The difficulty in defining poetry lies in the fact that there is poetry of the thought and poetry of the form, prose form and prosiness of the thought. All compound words are awkward and misleading. If you say "poetical prose," prose denotes the form—if "metrical prose," prose applies to the content. "Poetical prose" is a slander on prose, and "prose poetry" a libel on the poetry. To see how mongrel is the form of Whitman's verse, compare the forceful, excellent prose of Lincoln's Gettysburg speech with the same thoughts put into Whitmanesque verse, as is done by Dr. Miller in *Literary Digest,* February 26th, 1916. Whitman and his followers have degraded poetry as the Cubists and Futurists have degraded art. The wonder is that any attention is given to them.

This exaggerated claim for freedom from the laws of poetry results in license being demanded and taken against truth also; at least against authoritative truth. Walt Whitman says that "the great poet is marked by unrestraint and defiance of precedent." What is that but saying that the saint is the man who indulges his pas-

sions, and the patriot he who disobeys his country's laws? Can we wonder at his disregard of prosody and of truth? Neither is lack of rhyme an evidence of strength or an element of beauty. "His rhymelessness," says Saintsbury of Mathew Arnold, "is a caprice of will-worship. Except blank verse, every rhymeless metre in English has on it the curse of the *tour de force* of the acrobat."

By none of these excesses does Mr. Durward's poetry offend. He always has something to say, and if not a technist it is because he has the straightforward utterance of Byron.

But some may ask: Is not Catholic dogma and discipline cramping to the poetic imagination on which poetry so much depends, and a check to its expression for fear of incurring Church censure for false doctrine? Not till the compass is a curb to the mariner, not till the laws of grammar and the requirements of metre are obstacles in the way of perfect expression, not till the facts of history hamper the historian. It will haply prevent his losing time trying to make error appear beautiful by enduing it with the vesture that should have been given to truth—but the Church never interferes with the vision that sees or the language that presents the highest aspects of truth, even where such speculations transcend her actual teaching. The Church that allows such a near approach to evolutionary theories as is evinced in the writings of Zahm and Wasmann (without falling into the false conclusions of atheistic science), the Church that permits the subtle and mystical unification of the natural with the supernatural in the writing of Coventry

Patmore and Robert H. Benson (avoiding, however, the quagmires of Swedenborg), can not be accused of stifling imagination.

But, as a matter of fact, are not Catholic Poets of the present day inferior to non-Catholic pantheistic writers? With Coventry Patmore, Aubrey de Vere and Francis Thompson in evidence, we answer with an emphatic negative, though we must confess that the charge of Francis Thompson in the opening passages of his "Essay on Shelley" is not unmerited. We must acknowledge, too, that a great deal of the best work, poetically, of the last twenty-five years is tainted with pantheism which, with its vagueness as of a Turner landscape, lends itself well to the glorification of nature, of our brotherhood with the Cosmos, and identity with Deity, and to liberty from any law except our own mind. Because this atheism can hide under poetic license where its lack of logic and its immorality are not easily detected, aided also by the exquisite technique of which those writers are masters, many are apt to take this for the highest poetry; but its beauty would not be lessened were the false philosophy eliminated. For it is in spite of, not because of, this false pantheism that such writing is beautiful. Substitute for the declaration that man *makes* his God (which is the burden of Don Marquis' "The God Maker, Man") the truth that man progresses to a fuller knowledge of the existent God as the ages roll on, and is the poem less beautiful? Eliminate in Alice Meynell's "To Any Poet" the false note of "absorption" into God and write with Cardinal Wiseman:

"Absorbed, yet *unconsumed;* entranced, yet free,"

thus preserving personal existence after death, and the beauty of the poem is enhanced. Or take Wordsworth's famous line!

> "Trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God who is our home."

It may equally well be held to express the Christian truth that we come from God our Creator bringing some of His brightness, and that He alone is our ultimate destiny. As an untruth is only a lie when intention to deceive is present—so poetry may not be unbeautiful if the language is not literally true, provided it is known to be figurative. The fault with much modern poetry is that one never knows which way to take it. Coming from a Christian it would be orthodox—but in the prevalence of atheism we are not uncharitable if we suspect it. Catholic poetry must avoid this ambiguity; and this necessity is indeed a difficulty in the way of writing popularily, though it is a safeguard against uttering anything lower than supreme poetry.

An untruth can not make a poem great. Joyce Kilmer has indeed come into notice by a pleasing conceit that is not a truth, viz., that a poem can never be as beautiful as a tree, because, forsooth, "trees are made by God and poems by fools like him," which does not prove that a poem is not equally with a tree the work of God acting through a higher agency, and, consequently, can be more beautiful. The dishonesty of pantheistic poets is apparent. They wish to "run with the hare and hunt with the hounds." They pretend, having eaten their cake, that they still possess it. Philosophically, they

deny personality to the Supreme Being, making it only a force, and then emotionally endow it with just those qualities that for want of a better word we call personality and which alone can make that force loved, and prayed to, and obeyed. They profess to have eliminated free will but not destroyed morality, which is absurd; to have liberated the will from authority without bringing in lawlessness. Where their philosophy refuses to recognize life after death their poetry is continually presenting the dead as still existing, still thinking and loving, still present with the living.

Another excusation of the inferiority of much Catholic verse, poetically, is that Catholic Truth and Morality being on a higher plane than uncertainty and error require a higher expression, and faith will not necessarily give one the genius of the artist; besides, the beauties of nature and the passions of earth appeal to man more intimately than anything supernatural. It is mainly in a poetic interpretation of human life in accordance with Catholic philosophy that the present-day Catholic poet has his field. Unless he can say things better than they have been said before he should be silent. There are many truths the unadorned utterance of which is satisfying; many beauties so patent that they do not require the vesture of fine speech to make them attractive. There is probably a limit to the worthwhile things that man may know and express in language, and in proportion as the inspired writers and the early poets have exhausted these truths, beauties and goodnesses the modern poet is more dependent on *expression* and technique than ever before. So, when all is said, the pres-

ent low level of Catholic poetry should be recognized, and a trumpet call go out for better work from Catholic writers. The *matter* is within their reach, the *form* in which to embody it is greatly a question of patient labor, and an age that has presented so finely the revolutionary thought and knowledge of the time *with* its falacies; surely ought to rise to the occasion and give it to us *minus* the error but *with* its enticing beauties.

But to return to Mr. Durward. Between 1852 (the date of his conversion) and the breaking out of the Civil War, no fewer than fifty of his best short poems were printed in the Milwaukee papers, the *Crayon,* of New York, and the *Leader,* of St. Louis, under the pen names of "Bernard" and "Porte Crayon."

Dr. J. V. Huntington of the *Leader* was the first genuine literary man of the poet's acquaintance, and naturally the first one able to appreciate the worth and originality of his genius. That the editor's lavish but always judicious and discriminating praise gave a hearty stimulus to the poet's muse we are justified in supposing, and that without charging poetic vanity with anything worse than sensibility—a gift that every poet must possess. True criticism—which means true appreciation—is the highest incentive to great endeavor that can come from the outside, and Dr. H. from his high literary attainments and sympathetic insight (he, too, was a convert) was eminently qualified for such a task. No beauty of thought or expression so great that he failed to grasp it, hardly one so small that it would escape him. Writing in May, 1855, under the title of "The Month of Poets," he finds occasion to say:

"We give this week another, in our humble opinion, exquisitely beautiful poem by 'Bernard,' written for the *Leader*. The freshness and power of this writer are evident in all that proceeds from him. There is nothing hackneyed in any of his pieces, though they are not all equally sparkling with beauties. We have had many sweet hymns and lyrics this month to the loveliness of May and in honor of its Immaculate Queen.

"But perhaps we may challenge them all to equal the following by 'Bernard,' which, over the signature of 'Porte Crayon,' appeared formerly in the Milwaukee *Sentinel*. This piece is in the finest spirit of classic English poetry, and is worthy (me saltem judice) of its brightest age. This may seem extravagant praise, but not to those who know what poetry is, and who have measured the poverty of the present day in that respect." See page 39.

The succeeding month he continues in the same strain while writing of "The Fair Science."

"The beauty and the grandeur of poetry are mainly in its unity of conception. Take, for example, the two 'Sunsets' by 'Bernard,' in one of which the departing luminary is figured as a chieftain dying in a field of glory; in the other as a good man expiring in calm. Every successive line and image in both, while it expands and diversifies the thought, faithfully circles around it. And every new image is grander and sublimer than the one before it, till, by a wonderful transition, the poet lets us down from that height to the quiet, shadowy level of the earth buried in twilight. And what is a peculiarity of the conceptions of the imagination, as distinguished from the conceptions of the fancy, each image by itself called up by the poet is simple and entire, not broken into heterogeneous parts, as where *consciousness,* and sight, and blushing* are severally attributed to one material element, without necessary connection. Thus where,

> 'One frail thing, with the intensity
> Of hopeless grief, scatters her glittering hair
> Along the sky and dies! Like the Hindoo
> Refusing to live longer than her lord,'

who does not feel the unity and self-consistency of this image, which brings indeed the luminous and glowing sky before you more vividly than the pencil of the painter could, but has a life

*"The conscious water saw her God and blushed," Dryden or Crashaw where, however, **Nympha Pudica** is not fully rendered by **conscious.**

too of its own, and without leaving the furnace of the west, the sun's bright funeral pyre, darts to farthest 'Ind' for a new moral tint to heighten the illumination of the picture and concentrate its sentiment of despairing grief and dazzling beauty! And who, again, does not feel from the moment that the poet describes, in the second line of his piece, the clouds as 'all plashed with *bloody* light,' every other image that follows becomes, as it were, necessary—the dying chief, the shining spears, the 'widowed queen' slowly descending into the yawning tomb of clouds, the invitation of the starry host to keep watch over these illustrious dead and 'heal the air with sphered requiem!'"

"We have already said that we do not insist much on the beauty of single lines. A single line in a poem is like a column in a temple, its greatest beauty is to be in proportion with the edifice it aids to support. Still, a single column may have a beauty of its own that wins our attention. So may single lines in a poem, even when detached from the rest. In such as these blank verse does not abound; they are more suited to couplets or rhymed stanzas. 'Bernard's' poetry is rich in them, even when he does not rhyme; among these we know of none that strikes *us* as finer than that in the short piece called 'Sunrise' which we published last week:

'And near behind,
The sun himself, with step of majesty,
The even majesty of time and fate—
Mounts to his flaming chair,'—

But others may prefer that splendid sunset verse,

'Sun, clouds, and all have vanished from my sight,
And twilight's silent loom is weaving day with night!'

For the best specimen of this writer yet published in the *Leader* we may refer, however, to 'The Dream,' in our first number, a piece which has this characteristic of the best poetry, that it is impossible to quote from without marring it, although the stanza descriptive of the *Limbus Infantum* can scarcely be read without an emotion of surprise, and curiosity to see the rest." (See page 31.)

Mr. Durward is especially happy in making a beautiful subject or simile do double duty, and, far from showing a poverty of choice, it proves that having once chosen wisely he never was done discovering new beauties of application by simply changing his distance, lighting and setting. Readers of Thoreau will remember his

complaint in the "Canadian Ramble" that the gorgeous American Autumn had scarcely touched our native literature. Now it so happened that at the very time "Bernard" was swinging airily round the circle of nature's tints and moods (when he was not reading us deeper lessons), an eastern writer was calling attention to "The Landscape Element in American Poetry," and selecting, with rather poor success, specimens of the "Element" from the pages of three native poets, *none of whom was Longfellow!* Now the simple truth is that Longfellow is undoubtedly second, and Mr. Durward as surely first as a native landscape painter in verse, always remembering the qualification, "Landscape with figures." Indeed, there are not a few who, after reading both his "Autumns," "To the Wisconsin River," "St. Mary's of the Pines," and especially his "Indian Summer," will show their appreciative penetration by considering him the *first poet of the day* in this special province.

Some of nature's features recorded in his poems are no longer present. The "cool Indian trail," then distinctly seen along the river bank and known by its peculiar grass, has disappeared. Also the "Indian Camping Grounds," with their smoke and the "Indian mounds, bird-shaped and monstrous," have been leveled and "arrow heads of flint and jasper" are less frequently turned up by the plow. The "swift-winged pigeons" that used literally to darken the sky in their flight to and from their nesting in the pines of Monroe and Jackson counties are extinct—the last dying last year (1915) in the Zoo at Cincinnati, and

"The terror-stricken band

Huddled round the mossy stone"—the quails—although protected by absolute prohibition, do not seem to increase.

The "beechen tree," most pictorial of our woods, with its smooth silver bole mottled with lichens, grey and olive, is gone from Milwaukee and almost from the State, and even the "Maple with crimson flame," the source of pioneer sugar, is rarer than in early days.

Apropos of "Indian Summer," Huntington writes:

"Our poetically disposed readers will not fail to mark the beauty and force of several images and passages in this piece—such as

> 'And thro' their boughs—*like ashes from a grate*—
> The leaves are falling.'

"It should be observed that the force of this comparison is not the *physical* resemblance of leaves in bright decay falling through the boughs of the autumn trees to bright embers falling through the bars of a grate, but the common moral emblem, which both appearances present, of life and brightness and warmth expiring and going into the state of death and 'cold decay.' Another, which has the same force of a double resemblance, is in the next verse—

> 'Yet thro' his boughs—like tears from heroes' eyes—
> Some leaves are falling. Ah! the falling leaves!'

"But best of all undoubtedly, and one of the finest comparisons, as well as one of the most graphic pictures, to be found in the range of our native poetry—entirely American in local coloring, and which portrays the Indian summer, peculiar to our climate, in one verse, with all its associations—is the third:

> *'The smoky air hangs on the Earth like bloom*
> *Upon a citron; or, as if a vast*
> *And busy Indian camping-ground was near;*
> But while I write a boy with flaxen curls
> Brings me some *arrow-heads of flint he's found.*
> Which seem to say too—"Ah! the falling leaves".'

"This last is a real incident. We have seen the boy and the

flint arrow-heads found in his father's little domain of 'Riverside.' And indeed, unless our memory serves us treacherously, the flaxen head has afforded another illustration of the 'falling leaves.' In the spring of life it lies in the earth. But the spirit of young Bernard Durward was ripe, we trust and think, for heaven."

There is a slight confusion here in regard to the "flaxen head" (which was written of Emerson, now Rev. John of Baraboo, Wisconsin, not of Bernard), but as it is of no moment outside of the family, I do not mutilate the beautiful line to correct it.

Of the "Farewell to the Milwaukee River" (Milwaukee meaning in the Indian "Plentiful stream") (see page 26), I will content myself with calling attention to just one line whose sentiment I cannot exactly parallel in the work of any poet I am acquainted with:

"But do not dream

That anyone will love so much thy beauty."

How much farther than the sound of the lip this takes us—the fathomed poverty of words—the eloquence of silence! And it is saying a great deal, but nothing more than the truth, that Mr. Durward knew just what to say, by leaving much unsaid. No poet has more sweetly though impressively sung of death, sung totally without bitterness, or rant, or cant, or vain imagery; the song (though in low, melodious accents) always attention-compelling, and the illusion, though incisive, always graceful.

In an article entitled, "Poetry: A Vernal Disquisition," Dr. Huntington makes some remarks so good that they would bear republishing and rereading every Spring, and

it would be well if the so-called poetry that periodically afflicts the editorial sanctums of the land were measured by some such yard-stick to see if it hold out "full width."

"Simplicity, strict propriety of terms, felicity which consists in a presentation of the thought or image so exactly that it can not be bettered, or changed without hurting the expression—these are essential characteristics of true poetry. Unity of subject is another. Variety and multiplicity of determinations in the expression of the one subject is another. A bright focus-point of light and expressiveness, in which the subject is conveyed at once with highest clearness, is another—for without this there can be no unity. Where all the parts are equally forcible there is no force. Hence, subordination of parts of the poem, absence or rather exclusion of all useless beauties that do not help to express the main theme, are eminently necessary. Above all, it wants a subject taken from the visible, sensible, natural world of human experience, and that subject to be, in the poet's mind, united with some super-sensuous, supernatural, spiritual truth, of which it is made the interpreter and the emblem, or else there may be verse and melody, and even graphic word-painting (as it is called), or vivid description of external objects, but no poetry—for man is a poet by virtue of his rational nature, not simply, but united with his sensuous nature by the medium of his imagination."

"These thoughts have occurred to us while perusing the following poem, by one of our contributors. The incident occurred on Palm Sunday, two years ago, in the new Cathedral of Milwaukee. It is a beautiful example of all that we have been saying. Bearing in mind Milton's definition, mark the perfect *simplicity* of the piece in thought and language, its vivid *sensuousness*, its *passionate* transition and motives (not *logical*, not *literal*,—the language of emotion and of feeling). There is unity of subject, there is variety of the determinations (i. e., of the points and aspects of the one subject—the wild dweller of the woods wandering within a perfect and brilliant work of human intelligence, ennobled indeed by religion), gradually all the finest features of the church are depicted, still in connection with the daring flights and interpreted fears of the restless visitant, till the whole theme is given in that one line—'Too bright for thee who with *gray nature* dwells,' the focus tint of the picture; then comes the elevation of the soul to our imprisonmen in life, to the wide and bright future which the 'sullen door' of death yet excludes us from, and shall open to us," etc. (See page 33.)

But Mr. Durward, though naturally a serious and always a painstaking workman, is much too true an artist to confine himself to grays and browns and penitential tints, to deny himself lightness and brightness, and romance, and the pleasures of Terpsichore. For all these we must read "Minnehaha," "Milwaukee Bay," "Debtors," and, best of all, "First Love."

Turn to page one and mark the iterative note of the incantation, the almost monotonous "passes" of the mystic wand:

> "Which in *secret place* I keep,
> In a *secret place* with care,
> *With a feeling strange and* deep,
> *With a feeling strange and* rare,
> * * * * * *
> Though *his treasure* shineth bright,
> He may still *his treasure* keep,

and throughout, the rhythmic swinging of a richly laden censer, till the air is heavy with sweet waking-dreams. The reminiscence—here—there—across the gulf of twenty years and five thousand miles of land and sea—then speculation, questionings, revery,—

"Hush"—

and the phantom is evoked (so compelling that third person is changed to second), dowered with eternal youth, tarrying only for a moment, vanishing at the moment of greatest luminosity, as the dreamer himself wakes in a vain effort to grasp it. What indeed is hypnotism, or the morbid trance of the poppy, beside such healthy and consummate magic as this?

There are many kinds of magic. In some, we find only the charm of novelty, and, having discovered how it is done, we are done with it forthwith. In another—the right kind, in verse at least—its beauty grows on you. The stanzas "To Father Marquette" illustrate this. Here we have only a very slender, though vivid, thread of historical certainty, but the very limitations of the historical data are turned into beauties under the breath of the poet's inspiration. Observe the closeness of the human, personal relation the poet establishes between himself and the long-dead tenant of an unknown grave, the human attribute so deftly applied to the "river obscure" that

"Keeps the secret and dies,

Which the murmuring Michigan ne'er can disclose,"

and the "smoke of the incense" that embalms every musical line. Perhaps only the connoisseur will look for the reason of the singular charm of the line—

"And the cross has sunk down and unseen on thy breast."

The momentary glimpse of the threatened imperfection of line so directly turned, with the simple repetition of a word, into an added grace and emphasis—but no one except the city-blighted can miss the wonderful perspective of the couplet:

"And the trees that hung over have mixed with the mould,
And the new forests spread their green roofs to the skies."

It would doubtless be news to the readers of such

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It would doubtless be news to the readers of such

well-paid verses as those of Riley, Field, and Mrs. Wilcox that all this time the "Poet of Riverside, the Bard of Milwaukee, the Burns of Wisconsin," as Huntington happily dubbed him, received *not one cent* for any of the work we have been reviewing.

In 1861, after a romantic trip by rowboat down the Wisconsin River, the splendid verses to that stream appeared in the *Crayon*. On this vacation jaunt was discovered "Geordie's Gorge," later called "Durward's Glen" in Caledonia, Columbia county, Wisconsin. With love at first sight Mr. Durward determined to make it his. Indeed in after life he declared that God had made it especially for him. George Mearns, the owner, would not hear of selling. "I have all my life been a hewer of wood and drawer of water for my relations. I am now living in independence." What that independence meant was shown in a pan of wheat soaking in the brook for his dinner! A year after, however, he concluded to sell and Mr. Durward, who had returned to his duties at St. Francis, being informed, purchased the 40 with the exception of 6 acres that Mr. Mearns reserved to be near the loved spot. This he also sold later and returned to his relatives in the East.

In 1862 Mr. Durward moved his family with his *Lares* and *Penates* by one horse team to "The Glen," arriving on All Saints' day and taking possession by cutting a Maltese Cross in the face of the rocks—the "Sacred symbol in the stone."

He was glad to escape from city life; his neighbors were uncongenial and the "dull routine" of professional duties was telling on him. The Civil War was felt more

acutely in town. His sympathies were with the South; holding that the United States should have purchased the slaves instead of freeing them by force. In 1861 he wrote:

"Old Abram Lincoln, famed for splitting rails,
Like one of his own wedges, touched with rust,
Was by the Abolition beetle doomed
To split and drag the Union to the dust,"

but he came later on to appreciate him at his worth.

This removal bore good fruit of poesy. Witness the fine verses "To the Wisconsin River," "Time," "The Living Spring," the playful description of his vineyard in "Grapes and Wine," and new aspects of surrounding nature perceived in "Good Night" and "Rest and Pray." Particularly must be noted "St. Mary's of the Pines," in which, according to Mr. Durward's correspondent, the gifted Irish poet of Curragh Chase, Adare, he reached his high-water mark.

In perfect proportion of each part and as a whole, in an elevated and scholarly diction, in idealization of the actual, in the intertwining of the animate and inanimate (but never in the mistaken pantheism that *identifies*); in the union of heart and intellect, of the human yearning with the divine aspiration, it is the ripest fulfillment of a multitude of previously successful efforts in these same directions. But from its very balance it is not so *immediately* effective with many readers as some less perfect poems. Perhaps it appeals more strongly to those who know the scenes and circumstances, as it is also intensely personal. Here at "the Glen" was born another daughter—Thecla.

About this time the *Ave Maria* of Notre Dame, Indiana, offered a prize of $200.00 for the poem "containing the best praise of the Blessed Virgin."

Durward's "To the Blessed Virgin" was submitted; but the prize went to George H. Miles' "The Sleep of Mary." Mr. Durward so felt the injustice of the award that he issued a pamphlet in protest of the very low literary criticism of the day. He contends that as outward form and inward grace are both essential to a sacrament, as body and soul to the making of a man, so the poem with perfect form, as of a Grecian vase with nothing redundant and nothing lacking, must be greater than the one that is formless. Now for the soul. He makes the profound plea that the highest praise of a person above us is to imitate him and ask his help. This is evidence of his wisdom and his goodness, without the bad taste of flattery. Especially is this true of our attitude toward God or to her who holds the key to the treasure-house of His grace. A poem that is merely descriptive of the Blessed Virgin's qualities or history can never be as perfect praise of her as a hymn that is also a *prayer*. The former might be written by a Pagan, the latter only by a Christian. And the writer proves by numberless examples that even Protestant poets, as true artists instinctively finding the highest viewpoint, make their poems prayers. Prayer is above all the touchstone of a Christian. Henry Van Dyke vindicates Tennyson from the charge of being a pantheist by referring to his doctrine of prayer, "for prayer is the best acknowledgment of the reality of a God *in* the world indeed but also *beyond* it, a living, personal power. "Pantheism, that

subtlest of errors, is the destruction of prayer.* Consequently, "the highest praise of the Blessed Virgin resolves itself into a prayer."

Thus the prize ought, by right, to have gone to Mr. Durward's rosary-like poem, which, while it is excellent verse (plainly better than Miles'), is not, to my thinking, great poetically, being too much of a catalogue and its stanza being too artificial. Of his strictures on Miles' work as poetry we need not enlarge, for "The Sleep of Mary" is not included in the poems edited by the late Father Cox of Chicago; but to show the injustice (perhaps unintentional) of even Catholic publishers to those who have failed to blow their own bugle, we remark that while Miles has a column in the Catholic Encyclopedia, Mr. Durward is unmentioned, as is also the artistic religious work of his son, Charles.

It requires space "for time to winnow with his heavy wing" the mediocre from the great, and the verdict of even great critics on writers' work is so staggeringly contradictory that we can only explain it by the almost infinite variety in the facets of beauty; one seeing one aspect and appreciating it, another, another; or by a too hasty verdict without repeated acquaintance. Some poems require to be read many times, others flash their beauties on us at once. I would venture the assertion that at the first reading we may see that a work *is* great, but not at once decide that another is *not* great.

The new impetus given to his pen by leaving Milwaukee shows that a change of scene and new interests were necessary to his Muse. Here, amid scenery that

*The poetry of Tennyson, by Henry Van Dyke.

reminds one of "The hills and vales of Caledonia," in the last and most beautiful of his homes, wonderfully described in word and picture in "Annals of the Glen" by his son Wilfrid, he could live near to nature, cultivating his grape-vines and making pictures as well as wine, of their vintage, "Glad," as he writes, "that he could enjoy little, simple things; and in perpetual gratitude and wonder for God's Providence in his regard."

With the neighbors' assistance, he built a little church of native stone on his property where was gathered a congregation who found Portage too far off in those days of ox-teams, and Baraboo had as yet no Church. In this chapel his two sons sang their first Mass. It was attended fitfully from Portage and by priests from Milwaukee, who came to visit the poet—Bishops Heiss and Katzer and Flasch, Dr. Salzman, Mgr. Rainer and others, and Mr. and Mrs. Durward served the congregation as catechists.

But our author was growing old; "springtime visions fade away" and he no longer speaks of nature with the inspired utterance of early years. But, has it not been so with all poets? Keats, Shelley, Byron, Burns, Francis Thomson,—all died comparatively young. We sigh at thought of what literature has lost, but are we sure that longer life would have added greener laurels?

After this Mr. Durward adopts more frequently the sonnet form—an admirable one where there is a thought just large enough to fill it without padding or without overflowing, and where the poet has the cameo-sculptor's genius to make every line beautiful and the whole a unity, subsisting in itself—like Jerusalem. A perfect

sonnet is like a plant. In the octette we see the development of stem and leaf and bud which in the sestette bursts into blossom, or into our praise or application of it to life. This division or rather *trope* I consider essential to the best sonnet form. This being neglected, together with the liberties now taken with the rhyme order, results in many sonnets being only fourteen-versed poems. From its classicality and from its very limitations, the sonnet has acquired a fancied sacredness that often covers trite poverty of thought or offensive didacticism. I venture the observation that the greatest poets, at their greatest, did not write in sonnet form. There is too much of the "made to order" about it, too little of the spontaneous joy of creation, the freshness of youth and the romance of passion. More hearts throb at lyric poetry than at any other.

Mr. Durward's sonnets compare favorably with those of even the greatest names. In the octette they follow mostly the Petrarchan order of rhyming, but in the sestette, more the Wordsworthian. His sonnets of Devil's Lake are so varied in their subject and object that they can not be styled a "sonnet sequence," that most tiresome ringing of the changes on some outworn sentiment.

In 1872 had appeared the first collection of his poems —"Wild Flowers of Wisconsin"—printed, but, Mr. Durward, not being a merchant, never commercially published.

The longest poem is "Christina," which, written as was Dante's masterpiece, *in mezzo camin' di vita,* stands between his two periods and manners; partaking of his

earlier, inspired poetry and his later, unfortunate didactic manner.

The story embodied in the poem is simple—simply the story of two lovers—Hubert and Christina—both Catholics.

Hubert is conducted through hell and Heaven by the spirit of Dante, and discovers while in Heaven, in a very personal and poetic manner, the added halo that the Catholic Church and the New Testament throw 'round virginity for Christ's sake. He is charged by his guide to tell of this vision to his sweetheart, and, on doing so, discovers her own secret thoughts in this direction. The story closes with the death of Christina and a glance at the resigned and faithful Hubert waiting in his solitude the summons to join her in the next life.

This is a brief but sufficient outline for our purpose. No fault is found with the story; it is simple and beautiful. Now for the poetic treatment. It will be useful to bear in mind some facts personal to the poet if an appreciation of atmosphere is to be gained; and I also feel it incumbent on me to state frankly that I consider a clear perception of the obtrusive didacticism of some of the narrative to be a simple and just tribute to the singular beauty of many passages throughout and of the entire closing Canto. The first fact is the poet's incursion into the domain of the celibate (1852-1854). The next fact is the strong, clear note of his personality that we find vibrating through every one of his utterances; a direct voice or an echo that always reaches us. It is this voice, or its echo, that most persistently grates on my ear in this poem. At all times—except when the

poet is himself a listener, (*vide* the rhymed stanzas of Hubert and the Priest)—we hear only the one accent, feel only the one identity whether he or Hubert speaks; the poet apparently forgetful that Hubert is not himself. This results in Hubert informing us on matters that it was the narrator's duty to mention, and, worse still, on historical facts that the poet indeed, as a man of education, was acquainted with, but which were certainly unknown to the simple Hubert—results also in the didacticism so fatal to poetry. On the other hand the work abounds in the choicest of passages: What more exquisite than the following:

"And her long weeping hair fell down like clouds
That *stream their darkness over sunny hills.*"

or:

"His brow is like a palace pale with light."

The lines following "for her sun-kissed cheek" dispute with Shakespeare's "Hide oh! hide, etc.," the sovereignty of beauty descriptive of a woman's breast, and bear away, I think, the palm; for Mr. Durward brings in the *child* also, making the mental picture less fleshly and more holy and perfect—as the "Madonna" is ever more satisfactory than the "Immaculate Conception."

"Who can describe the sun when from the deep
He springs, his moist locks dropping pearls and gold?"

The confessed inability is genius, as of the negatives of St. Paul in describing Heaven. How saint-like the virtue

"That shines *without the poor intent to shine.*"

How prophetic the song of Hubert:

"Fearful it is to love that which must fade,

Yet I will love thee, were death at thy side."

How much of the theology of Redemption (without any didacticism) in the description of the Crucifix:

"His head bows low, as if He spoke to children;
His arms extend, as if to clasp the world."

Or in the words:

"The measure of all love is sacrifice."

And what a picture in the *lines*:

"Ere the scythe of Time
Cut in two halves the vast eternity
And made a little gap for man to breathe."

And what modesty in a lover saying:

"I kiss thee as a nun would kiss a child
That has a mother of its own."

But the ending of the fifth and the entire last Canto, in beauty of single like, and in constant melody and unity of purpose, will compel us to cease quoting and praising, though reluctantly—for nothing is too good to say of the "most touching touch," of the reverent fingers that gently close the eyes and smooth the tumbled coverlid and pillows—draping with beauty the unbeautiful—of the eloquent abandon of the voice that cries:

"Weep! pilgrim of the earth so strangely left,
Weep! for thy human eyes were made for tears,"

yet stops short of despair; of the pliant yet firm hands that sustain and lift upward.

"Who can behold unmoved the moveless form,
Soon to be formless, of the one beloved."

Verily, no one born of woman. And yet, drawing breath, it is surely the *unmeasurable* beauty of the part that accounts for the impatience we feel at the flaws in the *measurable* symmetry of the whole.

The *denoument* of the story—God's providence causing the lovers to give each other up for the higher love of God and permanent union in Heaven—is refreshingly different from the hacknied "they lived happy ever after" or the weak heartbreak or despair that would end in the tragedy of suicide or in the comedy of consolation in another mortal love. All these are absent; and so holy is human love esteemed that it is not caprice or even a personal choice of celibacy that may break it, but only God's hand—His will plainly expressed and their sacrifice by Him inspired. It is not the fickleness of mortal love, so pregnant a source of separations. It is a touch so new that even the worldly who would not have recognized God's will if the convent or the sanctuary had broken up the union must acknowledge it here.

Coming as "Christina" does, between the poet's two periods, it is not surprising that it partakes of both—the earlier, warmer nearness to nature, of spontaneous utterance and luxuriant imagery, all that comes of April's gleams, and the literature of the

"Dim and dusky grey
Of the twilight and the evening,"

more narrative, but less inspired; more didactic, but less inspiring; more classic, but less living.

Not only was "Christina" written partly at Milwaukee and partly at "The Glen," but Hubert's *habitat* is described from two different localities. The "far land which I shall see no more by roses and the sea encircled" is Montrose, Scotland. The "hill with higher hills around" is the chapel hill of St. Mary of the Pines, Wisconsin; with its "brook born of unnumbered busy springs" from weeping ledges and from hidden fountains, with the "gloomy pine trees on the rock's worn brow" and its little graveyard in the sun. It is matter of surprise, therefore, that the artist has so successfully made a consistent composite picture.

During 1875 he was editor of the *Milwaukee Catholic Magazine* which died (painlessly) at the age of the Paschal Lamb. In the same year, his artist son, Charles, who already had excelled him in originality of design and in technique of execution in religious subjects, was accidentally poisoned by eating of a wild root, the *Cicuta maculata* or water hemlock. This was the death of Art in the family, although the beautiful verses, "Higher Up on the Banks of This Stream," were written after this loss.

Hereafter Mr. Durward's muse was didactic. *Pace* Wordsworth who writes, "every great poet is a Teacher; I wish to be considered a Teacher or nothing," *Pace* J. G. Holland's earnest attempt to make poetry the vehicle of morality, we must still maintain that poetry's reason of being is primarily the presentment of beauty and the effecting of delight. When verse becomes professedly didactic it ceases to be poetry. This is not saying that poetry does not teach nor improve, but only that this

instruction or morality is not its immediate object and must not obtrude itself—mere knowledge could be better given in prose—though from the delight we rise to the edification. In this sense Sir Stephen de Vere says: "An author must bear in mind that it is his office not only to please but to instruct and educate." So, too, Milton avers that "the mission of the poet is to describe with a solid and treatable smoothness whatever in religion is holy and sublime; teaching over the whole book of sanctity and virtue with *delight,* especially to those who will not so much as look upon truth unless they see her elegantly dressed."

He very rarely used the Scotch dialect, probably schooling himself against it for the sake of his professorship. He was not interested in translations, saying: "What is the good of being able to say 'spoon' in four languages if you have nothing to eat in any of them?" A translation can never give both the substance and the form of the original. But that he would have been an admirable translator is evinced in his version of this remarkable sonnet by Gianni (page 95):

Al ora che Giuda di furor satollo
Piombo dal ramo, rapido si mosse
Il tutelar suo demone, e scontrollo,
Battendo le ali fumiganti e rosse,
E per la fune che pendea dal collo
Giu nel bollor delle Tartare fosse;
Appena con le forte unghie aventollo
Che arser le carni, e sibilaron le osse.
E giunto nell ignivoma bufera
Lo stesso oribil Satana fu visto

L' accigliata spianar fronte severa.
Poi con le braccia incatenò quel tristo,
E con la bocca insanguinata e nera
Gli rese il baccio che avea dato a Cristo.

Metrical versions of the Psalms would not be in disgrace had we more such as "Super Flumina Babylonis" (see page 208). Observe the psychology in the word "because" in the second strophe, which is apparent in the Vulgate but neglected in the Protestant versions; and also the hope in the word "slept."

Mr. Durward's sonnets, European and Miscellaneous, all take their place in his later style, though they extend over a period of twenty years. Later he becomes still more didactic—and writes his longest, most pretentious work, "Colombo: An Epic," which we will notice, but not include, in this volume. To begin with, we must observe that it is no epic. For an epic there is required a great character, hero of a great action, presented in great language. Columbus is indeed great, and his enterprise great, but he is not the subject of this poem, nor is its expression poetical. The whole effort is to present what the poet considered Christian optimism, but which is only veiled fatalism, untrue to Theology, lacking in logic and devoid of beauty. Revolting from the pessimism that in fine words tells us nearly everything in the world is wrong, and that it can not be righted, Mr. Durward fell into the apparently opposite philosophy (which is but pessimism with a smile) that as God is good and the creator of everything, there is no evil; that "everything that is, is right;" that "man is free to do only that which he does;" that "all are saved"

—even those in hell—and this is styled Christian optimism—missing the middle way where truth lies, that indeed there *is* evil in the world, though philosophically it is a negative, and that it may be conquered and turned to good by those of good will. This didacticism—even were the philosophy in it true—would alone have ruled "Colombo" out of the rank of poetry, but it was also destitute of beauty and sometimes even lacking in true metre. In many of his shorter poems, too, there is a reading of the moral that is unpoetical—this should be left to the intelligence of the reader—and this is rendered still more objectionable when a weak stanza or last line is used to do this work. This alienation of the fancy, this parching up of the crystal spring can only be accounted for by the advance of old age and by his losing that close sympathy with nature's muse so essential to poetry, through becoming out of touch with the aims and aspirations of the younger generation. Verification of this is amply found outside of the poems themselves, for it is melancholy to tell that the poet in later years was outwardly as well as in secret spirit in conflict with the age, personified in his own children—the wonder and despair of his family for many years. Old age also emphasized in him that lack of logic that could hold statements to be true that were diametrically opposite; for instance, that Catholic teaching is true and from God—but also that "Might is Right," that "natural and supernatural are one," that "a higher religion than Christianity will come when men will not need sacraments," etc., all of which is contrary to Catholic Faith.

This inconsistency was not insanity, nor was it rejec-

tion of Christian philosophy. I believe it to have been a mental fallacy whereby words are used in different meanings, of which even the speaker is unconscious.

Mr. Durward was a most agreeable conversationalist, and, though no logician, ordinarily appeared to get the better of an argument, often by the sophism called *ignoratio elenchi,* i. e., proving, not the thing that was affirmed, but something resembling it, though different—the point at issue being forgotten in the discussion and the laurels going to the best talker.

Taking the negative in a debate before the Theologians of St. Francis Seminary on the question: "Resolved, That man has free will," his triumph was so striking—he had all the atheist arguments at his finger ends—that the Rector insisted on him giving a lecture establishing the Christian position.

His poetry exhibits a high appreciation of the human affections and reverence for human ties. He would often castigate the crime of divorce, so prevalent in our day, and the race suicide—and he had "no maukish sympathy with crime," tho' tender-hearted as a woman. He was distinctly a gentleman of the old school; could not tolerate the vulgar Sunday papers with their inartistic caricatures, destroying respect for high personages and appreciation of beauty. Although highly abstemious, he had no sympathy with the prohibition movement—after hearing a priest preach a temperance sermon he remarked "that was the most *intemperate* sermon I ever listened to."

Mr. Durward does not belong to any group of poets; indeed it is only for convenience that poets are grouped,

for each one is unique. The Pre-Victorian poets were singing when he was a boy, Byron, Moore, Scott, Burns and the Lake School—Coleridge, Wordsworth and Southey.

These were passing away during his young manhood, but were being succeeded by Keats and Shelley, by Browning and Tennyson, and in America by Whittier, Longfellow and Emerson. None of these he knew personally except the last named, and that only as a lecturer. In those days nothing good was looked for out of the West any more than from Nazareth.

Of Catholic poets he was contemporary with Coventry Patmore, whom he visited in 1878 at Hastings by the Sea, Aubrey de Vere and Newman, whose reputation as a prose writer has overshadowed his fame as the poet of "The Dream of Gerontius." Francis Thompson had not yet been discovered by Alice Meynell, who since then has showed herself a poet of excellence. In this country there was only Father Ryan giving more than mediocre verses to the periodicals.

It would be presumptious as well as useless to fix a line dividing major from minor poets, but Mr. Durward would be among the "humbler poets." Some of his work is excellent "verse" ("verse" having to my mind its own honorable and benificent mission), but not great poetry; but is this not true even of the greatest names? I do not hold with Horace that minor poets are not to be tolerated by gods or men, for, like *Ursa Minor,* which *contains* the pole star which *Ursa Major* only points at, some of our most beautiful and inspiring verses have come from those poets classed as minor. Is it not pos-

sible that we will have to conclude that the best poetry does not always mean the greatest poet; since *quantity* of work, greatly done, seems essential to the major poet? Here again, in output, Mr. Durward is minor. But, considering the shortness of life and the increasing cost of printing paper, is it not time that a poet should write little and that his best; and only the best of his best be published, and by his best should he be judged.

Since Mr. Durward ceased writing there have appeared the Catholic poets Lionel Johnson, Louise Imogene Guiney, Catherine Tynan and Father Tabb, Thomas Walsh, Joyce Kilmer, Condè Pallen, Thos. A. Daly and others—a gleam of a Catholic Renaissance; may it increase! But still in America poetry and literary criticism are at a low ebb. Mr. Durward easily holds still the first place in America's Catholic poets.

He lived to be eighty-five years of age, always active, though never robust; always a delightful companion, but the latter years embittered by his exaggerated sense of authority over his wife and grown-up children. As he had always claimed that a good despotism is the best government, he, full of love for his family, was grieved and angered that they could not remain his loving slaves. He died March 21, 1902, and is buried among his loved pine trees, by the chapel that he builded and of which he wrote the wish:

> May my mouldering ashes lie
> Blest and near thee, though unheeding
> Song of Vespers,

Or the Kyrie Eleison's
Plaintive cry!

And so the "Gorge of Beauty" holds his memory in its keeping green and fragrant as the pines. The following tribute from the pen of Eliza Allen Starr may fittingly close this memoir:

To B. I. Durward.

Bard of the Wild-rose! never verse like thine,
Has sung this wilding blooming in its dell;
No poet's eye has ever caught so well
The artless marvel of its chaste outline;
Each blushing petal's eloquent design;
The virgin freshness of its breath; the swell
Of anthered coronal, of honied cell,
Wherein such precious symbols flush and shine.
Plead for him, wilding rose, unto that Heart,
Heart or our hearts, in which we move and live,
That of its treasures it may freely give;
Replenishing his soul with sacred fire;
Attuning still to God his sweet-voiced lyre,
To bear, in seraph choirs, a poet's blissful part.

If Mr. Durward represents the poesy of the family, Mrs. Durward as surely represents the piety and faith; a devotion never wearied, a faith never wavering. She brought up her eight children without help of nurse or servant; making their clothes before the advent of sewing machines, spinning the wool and varying the drone of her wheel by interlarded book-instruction to the little ones at her knees. Her spare moments were devoted to

the making of albs which are the treasures of many a church. There is one at the Sepulchre of Christ in Jerusalem, and General Sherman's wife obtained one for her reverend son the Jesuit. She survived her husband six years, reaching the age of eighty-seven, and lies at his side. Inscribed on her stone are the words "Mother of Priests."

Early Poems

FIRST LOVE.

Braided tress of auburn hair!
  Which in secret place I keep,
In a secret place with care,
  With a feeling strange and deep,
With a feeling strange and rare,
  That can neither laugh nor weep,
Like a miser with his heap,
  Now I bring thee to the light;
  Though his treasure shineth bright,
He may still his treasure keep;
  Dearer to my heart is mine,
Dearer to my soul and sight,
  Far less earthly—more divine!

Braided tress of auburn hair!
  Severed by a bashful hand
From a form I thought so fair,
  In a far, far distant land;
Sent to me—to me alone—
  Nearly twenty years agone,
From the marge of eastern sea,
  On whose hard, wave-furrowed sand,
  Heart in heart, and hand in hand,
Save to love unconscious, we,
  Having naught but hope in store,
  A live-long day in parting wore,
  Now I see, to meet no more.

Dost remember? Thou wert there,
Little nestling lock of hair?

Braided tress of auburn hair!
Many thousand miles with me
Thou hast come, through foul and fair,
Over land and over sea;
Many thoughts are left behind,
Memories that time hath ta'en,
Many feelings hid in dust,
Thou, unaltered, still remain;
Still remainest, and I trust
Will. A voice so low and kind
Whispers to me, "Could you dare
Forget this little lock of hair?

Braided tress of auburn hair!
Thou art young, and rich, and gay.
Are thy mates all dashed with gray,
Silver fruit of pain and care?
O, if thou couldst tell me where
The dear head is where you grew,
If for her the sun and dew
Beads the grass, and glads the air,
If she spends a thought on me,—
I would give thee—kisses three.

Hush! She stands beside me now—
Vision dear, untouched by time!
Like a budding virgin flower,

Dewy lips and rounded brow,
  Ever in thy girlhood's prime,
    Youth eternal is thy dower.
Let me press thee to my heart;
  Let me kiss thee as of yore.
Never, never shall we part,
  Time nor death shall part us more.
Yes, I know those eyes of thine—
  Ah! She melts into the air,
Leaving me o'er thee to pine,
  Priceless lock of auburn hair!

EARTH.

Bride of the Sun! vast, teeming, lovely Earth!
Thou that, in high obedience to thy lord,
Like a true woman, yields with such a grace
Thy many-wombèd lap—we bid thee hail!
We bid thee hail on this thy bridal morn,
Renewed from year to year, and age to age,
Thro' countless time! Thou mother of us all!
Like fruitful matron, generous and rich,
No grudgings ever come to thy large heart
Of stinted food for thy unnumbered children!
Thy bounteous breast hath milk enough for more
Than ever yet have breathed thy fragrant air.
The modern growth of cold, rebellious thought,
Unwomanly, unmanly, and inhuman,
That wills the purchase of untimely death,
For ease and shallow pleasures, is not thine—
So much thou lovèst life, and growth, and beauty.
Even now the Spring is stirring thro' thy veins,
Tho' snow is on thy face; the very buds
Are folded into cones, as if to cleave
Their way to heaven, like childhood's attitude
In prayer; and the pale snowdrop, leaving
All its winter gloom of doubt and darkness,
Adds to our faith that God the Father liveth.
O! lovely Earth! the Poet is like thee:
The precious seed of thought which he receives
From heaven, in moonless, starless nights of pain,
And poverty, and sorrow, he yields back
To light, clothed in the melody of human speech!

INDIAN SUMMER.

The forest is on fire! the nightly frosts,
The stealthy vanguard of grim winter's power,
Have turned the ash and beechen green to gold,
And lit the maple leaves with crimson flame;
And through their boughs, like ashes from a grate,
The leaves are falling. Ah! the falling leaves!

The dark green oak alone, like hopeful heart,
Carries his fresh youth into wintry age,
And views the dwindling pathway of the sun,
Unmoved, while weaker ones around grow pale;
Yet through his boughs, like tears from hero's eyes,
Some leaves are falling. Ah! the falling leaves!

The smoky air hangs on the earth like bloom
Upon a citron; or, as if some vast
And busy Indian camping ground were near;
But while I write, a boy with flaxen curls,
Brings me some arrow-heads of flint, he's found,
Which seem to say, too, "Ah! the falling leaves!"

How many withered hopes, from human hearts,
Lie like seared leaves, along the vaults of death!
And, sadder yet, how many hearts grown cold,
Still living, but without the fire of love!
Decay and death make harvest all the year,
And make us sigh still, "Ah! the falling leaves!"

TWILIGHT.

[ON THE MILWAUKEE.]

The sun in glory hath gone down,
  And all the clouds that round him played,
  Are melting into deepest shade—
A monarch and his courtiers flown.

Now, in this wicker-work canoe,
  Of birchen bark, by red man made,
  I, having crossed myself and prayed,
My homeward journey may pursue.

O, blessed streak of northern light,
  That rests upon this silent stream,
  With such a soft and holy gleam,
Half way between the dark and bright!

The bold, steep banks are filled with gloom;
  And in the gloom the fire-fly plays,
  And lightens up its twilight days,
As we with bright thoughts near the tomb.

The shadows by the water's edge
  Are moveless, as the tall, dark trees
  That make them; not the slightest breeze
Is stirring reed, nor rush, nor sedge.

The waterlily, pure and mild,
  Is closed among its circled leaves;
  And as the mother's bosom heaves,
So sways and sleeps the dreamy child.

The fragrance of the wilding rose
  Breathes sweetly from the hidden banks,
  Like one who gives, nor cares for thanks,
But does his good when no one knows.

All things are full of thought and quiet,
  From weed and tree, to sky and star;
  They lift my heart and soul afar
From city dust, and din, and riot.

And one by one the stars peep through,
  To see their faces in the river,
  As they've been doing now forever,
And evermore are like to do.

But yonder is the star I love!
  The light from my own window gleaming,
  Where prattling voices, bright eyes beaming,
More than the lamps of heaven my spirit move!

DEBTORS.

The winds are debtors to the flowers
For fragrance given;
The trees are debtors to the showers
That fall from heaven.

The fruits are debtors to the sun
For ripening beams;
The springs are debtors to the clouds,
To springs, the streams.

The earth is debtor to the moon,
For love's own light;
The lone barque to the polar star,
For guidance right.

And I am debtor to thine eyes,
So dark, so bright!
Ah! let this heart unto thy heart
Own it to-night!

Hang like ripe fruit upon my neck,
Thou sweetest weight!
And let me press thy vermeil lips,
The door of fate!

And let me hold thy small, soft fingers,
Perfection's art—
What's this! the blood within them lingers,
In doubt which heart

It ought to flow to! how is this?
Ah! now I see!
Let us explain it with a kiss—
Both debtors we!

SUNSET.

The day is dying! and across my path
Streameth the golden lightning of the sun,
Bathing the hill-tops with his latest beams,
Brightening the spires that point from earth to heaven!
So the good man, when on his death-bed laid,
Forgetful of the pleasant vales of life,
Where he had pitched his dwelling of a night,
And mindful only of his highest thought—
The azure future, undisturbed and pure—
Casts his tired soul, so weary of unrest,
Upon the mountains of eternity!

And yonder loveful gathering of clouds,
Like friends drawn round the bright but sinking soul,
Take all the attitudes of hope and woe!
One fragile thing, with the intensity
Of hopeless grief, scatters her glittering hair
Along the sky and dies! like the Hindoo,
Refusing to live longer than her lord.
Another figure kneeleth, with bowed heart,
But bright, uplifted forehead—star-eyed hope
Whispers to him, "A day is naught to Time,
And Time is nothing to Eternity;
The parted meet again." Then, overpowered
By watching o'er his friend, sinks on the dusky rim
Of the horizon; and, while yet I linger,
Sun, clouds, and all have vanished from my sight,
And twilight's silent loom is weaving day with night.

THE MOTHER.

The *sweetest* baby that was ever seen!
Now, see! was ever anything like thee,
Thou little, restless, nestling, laughing sprite?
What dost thou want of me? What dost thou mean
With all that wild abandon? In thy glee,
I cannot hold thee. What now! wilt thou bite?

The dearest cherub! does he want his milk?
Ah! these are papa's eyes when he was wooing;
As full of love as are the summer skies,
That never seem to dream of storms a-brewing;
And thy dear hair is soft as yellow silk;
And on thy dewy lips, what heavenly dyes!

Thy cheek is softer than a beechen leaf
New opened; and thy breath is healing balm—
Did mother squeeze her little bird too hard?
Now he shall have it all to heal his grief;
Then say, "please, ma'am," for this! "A pedee mam."
Bless thee, my darling! Heaven be thy guard!

I would that thou couldst milk me till I die!
For earth has nothing finer than thy brow,
Which, like a heap of lilies near my heart,
I fain would water till its well be dry!
O, wingless angel! thou art sleepy now;
And sleep is like to death, and makes me start.

Hush! o'er the azure windows of his soul
Fall the rich hangings; yet his lips still move
As from the fountains of my love he drew
The life that feeds his life—away control!
I cannot help it, I will weep for love;
He is the flower—and *I* shall be the dew.

THE MOURNING DOVE.

"*Coo-aye, coo-coo-coo.*" Thou solitary bird!
That sittest wailing on the pendant boughs
Of the beech forest, thinking sorrow's note
Sweeter by far than all the songs of joy
That ever poured from ravished warbler's throat.
Say! hath thy life, like man's, the dull alloy
Of fading friendships, and of faithless vows?
Of childhood's lispings, lost as soon as heard?
Tell me in secret, what did fortune do
To make thee wail so? "*Coo-aye, coo-coo-coo.*"

That is thy answer, and means no doubt this:
That thou art no more happy than ourselves.
To give the *why* would puzzle me and thee;
Thou hast a coat for which none toils and weaves;
Thou hast for shelter the o'erspreading tree;
Thou hast the scattered grain from ripened sheaves
Of others' sowing; and we—thankless elves—
Have more a thousand times the grains of bliss
We never sowed—we want them gathered, too—
We cry, "Woe's me"—thou, "Coo-aye, coo-coo-coo."

Now I have wronged thee! Not for clothes or food
Could bird or mortal sing a song like thine.
Love, love alone, and sorrow—which is love
Sunk in the well-spring of the heart—can bring
A melody so plaintive; far above,
In its low murmuring grief, the loudest string
That ever made the soul of man divine!
For such a mourner, in this vaulted wood,
Who would not pass death's gloomy portal through,
If thou wouldst teach his love thy "*Coo-aye, coo?*"

WINTER.

Summer, 'frighted, far hath flown,
O'er the sunny South to play;
Winter mounts his crystal throne—
'Tis creation's holiday!

Weary Earth is gone to sleep
'Neath a sparkling coverlid,
All her beauties buried deep,
All her precious seeds are hid;
And the laughing streams are dumb
Which, like children on her knees,
Prattled to the wild-bee's hum,
To the flowers, and birds, and trees;
Trees that now like spectres stand,
All their twinkling leaves are gone,
Like a terror-stricken band,
Huddled round the mossy stone.

Myriad needle-points of frost
Drift along the tuneless air;
All the wild-wood notes are lost,
Save the snow-birds chirping there.
Nature's week of toil is done;
All is hushed, as if to pray
That once more the kindling sun
Would renew Creation's day!

Graves, like those who sleep below,
  Now are shrouded all in white,
Rounded finely with the snow,
  Cold and silent, day and night.
From my window I can see
  Little foot-prints, leading where
One low mound was heap'd by me—
  Half by me, half by despair.
Shadowless, but not forgot,
  There the sleeping sister lies.
Every one has some dear spot
  Which he sees through misty eyes,
Visiting where, unreceived,
  He must stand beside the door,
Then return, again bereaved,
  Again to mourn, as heretofore.
If for every shout of mirth
  Stricken hearts somewhere are pining,
Sure for every grave on earth
  Far above a star is shining,
Whispering, "Grief must pass away,
All things have their holiday."

Artist—La Somnambula—
  Frost is doing curious things,
Making, ere the break of day,
  Such fantastic pencilings—
Mountains, foliage and cloud—
  Over all the window-panes.
In the dwellings of the proud
  The cold tracery quickly wanes,

But where fortune frowning falls
In the huts of poverty,
It is slow to melt away.
Ah! the hovels of the poor,
  Where, around the sleeper's head,
The breath lies frozen, crusting o'er
  The scanty drapery of his bed.
Bring, ye idle pictures, bring,
Cheering hopes of coming Spring;
Keep his heart from perishing.

See! A spirit in the wind,
  Whitening the beards of men,
Leaving limping Time behind
  With his threescore years and ten;
Care and canker, toil and tears,
  Time requires to turn us grey,
Frost can crowd so many years
  All into a winter day.

FLOWERS.

Yes, flowers are beautiful. The queenly rose,
The pink, the lily, and the violet,
And all the blooms that, numberless, adorn
This wife of heaven, as jewels do a bride.
Yet, if they only tell me of themselves—
How they do separate the pregnant light,
And each take color suited to its form,
As tasteful woman chooseth her attire,
How they in many-sided beauty shame
The labored *one* view of the artist, Man,
Or their carousals among dewy wine,
Of silent loves where bees and winds are priests;
Or how they load the air with fragrant health,
As doth the Arab his swift desert ship
That carries myrrh, and spice, and cinnamon—
If they but tell me this, and nothing more,
They are but gilding on an unknown book,
They are but pearls upon a virgin's brow,
Whose eyes, and lips, and brow, we ne'er have seen.

The moon, whose eye of love shines on our rest—
The stars that sphere themselves in drops of dew—
The sun himself, in his sublimity—
Were tinsel only, serving but to mar,
And stain the far off blue eternity,
But for the still small voice that speaks through all,
"I came not hither of myself but am
Sustained by Him who all indeed sustains;
Whate'er of bright or beautiful thou seest,
More bright, more beautiful, remains unseen."

EDUCATION.

Curled, blue-eyed mystery!
Why has thy history
Ne'er yet to man been given,
Thou last rich gift of heaven?
Is it because Nature,
So rich and so lavish,
Hath many like thee?
Or is it that man is
So gothic and savage,
Having eyes, cannot see?
Oh! Nature can never
Although she tries ever,
Like thee make another,
For a son or a brother!
Three summers and better
The sun's been thy debtor,
For so throwing his light
From thy ringlets so bright,
Much further and better,
Than without thee he might.
Yet he does own the debt,
When thy blue eyes are wet,
When from those wells of light,
Dimming thy own dear sight,
The crystal tear trickles,
Ah! then he ne'er stickles,

But trembling on each drop,
His star signet is set!
Then, to make peace with thee,
See how he treats with thee!
Giving to thee that citron
For a round stool to sit on;
Or to poise 'tween thy shoulders,
While the captive beholders,
Held fast by thy childish joy,
See Atlas once more a boy!

Thou art all Nature's now!
Art hath no part in thee;
Care hath not plowed thy brow,
Nor chilled the fond heart in thee;
Custom's slow-staining breath
Hath not come near to thee;
Penury, sin and death,
Have not brought fear to thee.
What good can I do thee?
Try to teach and subdue thee?
Ah me! THOU art master,
For surer and faster
That same work you do ME.
Gold I have none to give,
Nor acres to leave thee—
Yet He that bids you live,
Will never bereave thee
Of the sun, morn and even,—
Of the wind and the shower,—
The clear blue of heaven,

And the blue in the flower,—
The smooth lakes that mirror
The pale moon and the star,—
The dear brook at thy feet—
The gray mountain afar—
An eternal inheritance,
Beauty's own dower.

For what are you sent here,
With those spirit-eyes to peer?
I scarce dare to kiss thee,
Though thou sayest thou art mine,
With those sweet lips of thine;
Yet my heart must aye bless thee.
For what had you birth here?
For what are you given?
You bind me to earth here,
Yet raise me to heaven.
Like rosy morn, or fresh young spring,
The boy looked up, with lips apart,
Full brow, and eyes that reach the heart;
He seemed to say, "I bring! I bring!
"Lessons of Purity, of Truth, of Love,
Of freedom, and of Beauty from above;
An angel's work I do, without his wing!"

BY THE RIVULET.

(HE.)

Sweet Mary by the rivulet
  Sat smiling, weaving buds and flowers,
A garland for her locks of jet,
  Unmindful of the passing hours.

The water, murmuring like love,
  Stole round and kissed her naked feet;
And, half bewitched, it stayed and strove
  To end its course near one so sweet.

And so it lingered there a while,
  And to a circling pool it grew,
That it might large enough become
  To make one beauty into two.

And so, by all that's good and fair,
  I stopped, like it, that in my soul
I might enclose the vision rare—
  My heart I scarcely could control.

Her brow was full, and smooth, and low,
  Her eyes were two strange wells of light;
Her parted lips were in a glow
  Of health; her lovely throat was white.

And all around, her clustering hair,
  Like night tossed from the brow of morn,
Lay heaped upon her shoulders bare.
  Was ever fairer creature born?

"My arm is strong," I said, "My door
  Is covered by the clinging vine;
I love thee more, and more, and more!
  Dear maiden, say thou wilt be mine.

Ah! by that peerless name of thine—
  Peerless on earth, peerless in heaven—
Now let us seek the holy man,
  And sure his blessing will be given."

And so we did; and though her cheek
  Has lost its bloom, her hair its jet,
I still shall bless the day I won
  My Mary by the rivulet.

(SHE.)

I sat me down beside the brook,
  Beneath the overhanging trees,
And said, as some wild flowers I took,
  "I'll deck my raven locks with these;

For haply he may come this way;
  Nearer and cooler, too, it is.
Yet, if he speak, what shall I say?
  I hope there is no sin in this."

Just then a timid wood-dove flew
With noiseless wing, and in a pool
Dipt its fine neck of changing hue—
Companionless, yet beautiful.

I almost wept to see it so,
But soon, 'mong twinkling shadows faint,
It rose, and on a stately ash
Poured forth a low and sweet complaint.

The grape-vine clinging to the tree,
The song of sorrow from the bird,
The streamlet hastening to the sea,
Did so with my poor heart accord,

That, ere I heard his step, he stood
Quite near me—young, and brave, and wise;
He spoke, but sure I understood
Less from his words than from his eyes.

I saw nor stream nor clasping vine,
I heard no more the mourning dove;
For I was his and he was mine,
When heaven should sanctify our love.

And heaven did bless our steadfast love,
And side by side, in joy and care,
With hand, and head, and heart, we strove
To work, to learn, to cheer, to bear.

Though sunken now my Edward's eyes,
  They keep a kindly glance for me;
In being found I found a prize
  Beneath that vine, and ashen tree.

We've known the love begot of joy,
  We've known the love of sorrow born,
We know the hope that brighter grows
  As things of time get overworn.

My only wish is, if it please
  The One that made us, that we be—
Like apples in the farmer's hand—
  Both ripe at one—dropt from the tree!

NATURE.

When hope upon my soul distils
  Her blessed dew, and makes me glad,
The streams, the clouds, the distant hills,
  In gold and amethyst are clad:
And from the east a rosy light—
  A flush upon the brow of morn—
Springs, tender, soft, and calm, and bright,
  As over Eden newly born.

Nature, the mimic of the heart,
  Seems grand or mean, or foul or fair,
As Fortune smiles, or teardrops start,
  For every habit she can wear.
Whene'er I weep, whene'er I sigh,
  An answer comes from dripping clouds,
And hollow winds that moan and die,
  And take the withered leaves for shrouds.

When pressed with doubts on every side,
  She tells me all creation dies;
Points to the oak—the forest's pride—
  That low beside the bramble lies,
And whispers, "It can rise no more—
  All life is but the seed of death;—
Upon a sea without a shore
  We too must yield our fitful breath."

Away, thou echo of the soul!
  Thou changeful mirror of the mind!
Thy stolen treasures round us roll,
  And find us blind, and leave us blind.
Away! Our darkness cries for light
  Our bruises ask for healing balm;
Our hopes long for a steadfast height,
  Forever bright, forever calm!

AUTUMN.

Once more the Autumn, with his chilly dews
And smoky morning mists, for man is born;
O'er thousand fields the ranks of tasseled corn
Stand yellowing in the sun their grain profuse.

Around the cottage porch the trailing vine
Hangs its rich clusters for the purple stain—
Dear gift of Heaven—that holds the healing rain
To sprinkle drooping hearts—thrice-blessed wine!

The fitful winds that sway the tree-tops now,
Patter upon the leaves the unctuous store
Of nuts and seeds, till Labor's lap runs o'er,
For Plenty bends to earth the laden bough.

Like lumps of dusty gold the melons lie
Scattered about upon the scented ground;
And from the lingering blooms a humming sound—
The wild-bee's parting song—comes floating by.

Sweet are the folded, silken buds of Spring;
Sweeter, the unclasped gems of Summer's bowers;
Sweetest by far the long result of hours,
Of sun and dew—the fruits our Autumns bring.

Sweet is the folded bud, the cradled dove;
Fair is the bright-eyed girl, with soul of truth;
But sweeter, fairer, lovelier, in sooth,
The ripened maiden—richest fruit of Love.

Season of hope fulfilled—the hope of toil,
Ripener of fruit, whose garner is in heaven.
The thankful heart of man—has it, too, thriven,
As well as earthly corn, and wine, and oil?

FAREWELL TO THE MILWAUKEE.

Now must I part from thee, thou "stream of plenty,"
Mute, placid witness of unuttered thought!
Now must I say "adieu;" yet, ere I leave thee,
I thank thee for the lessons thou hast taught.
Love, birth and death, the triple keys which open
The weird and hidden chambers of the heart,
Have done their work on me since first I met thee,
And changed me somewhat—yet unchanged thou art.

Oh! stream unsung! Up thro' the silent ages
By many a grief and joy thy current swept,
Clasping serenest skies, or clouds of thunder—
And in thy depths forgotten stars have slept.
So life and death, and love and joy and sorrow
Shall still remain beside thee to the last;
And our brief day, that seems so large, shall dwindle
Ere long into the dim and shriveled past.

Sweet is thine office! the chaste moon disdains not
To come into thy bosom, and the star
Of eve makes thee her pillow, and the day-god
Cools in thy wave the hot light from his car!
Flow on! and lave the feet of yonder city,
That like a fair bride by her mirror stands,
And views her beauty, o'er and o'er delighted,
And binds her jewels on with milk-white hands!

"Riverside"—on the Milwaukee

Ah! when my ashes slumber in the valley,
"Life's fitful fever" over, thy broad stream
And rugged banks may list to finer numbers
Than these I offer thee, but do not dream
That anyone will love so much thy beauty;
So linked forever with my keenest grief—
So linked forever with new hope, new duty,
Is lilied bank, wild rose, and withered leaf.

What peace is this! Though 'tis thy gift to waken
Memories that turn thy ripples into tears,
My tears are tears of joy made calm and holy,
And patient hope illumes the coming years.
Adieu! I ne'er again may look upon thee,
But will remember tho' thou cease to run,
That by thy side the Great and Blest Creator
Took my sweet child, and gave—His only Son!

THE "FOURTH."

This is the "Fourth"!
Hear it, ye tyrant hearts, where'er ye be!
Hear it, ye struggling millions, not yet free!
From South to North!
Hear it, from rugged Maine to that bright strand
Whose rivers wander over golden sand;
Hear it, ye jeweled crowns, this is the "Fourth!"

Hark to the boom
Of iron-throated thunder, and the shout
Of thankful millions to the sky pealed out!
As if the tomb
That holds oppression, buried fathom deep,
Could never rise again to make man weep,
Or wrap our fertile land in fire and gloom.

Peace to the brave;
Peace to the wise, who won this heritage;
Glory to those who keep, from age to age,
From wave to wave,
Unbroken, this great birth-gift of young time.
Harbor for suffering souls from every clime,
Oh favored land! May God thee shield and save!

TO THE COMET.

(OF 1853.)

What ship ahoy? From what port dost thou hail,
And wither art thou bound, thou gallant barque?
Plowing, with burnished prow and shining wake,
The vast and margeless ocean of the air?
What is thy cargo? Hast thou slaves aboard,
Sent hither for their sins, anchored with chains,
All dark and grim, beneath thy golden hatches,
And whirled alternately from lurid fire
To the pale regions of eternal ice?
Or art thou laden with the spirits blest,
Who, as they pass each dazzling orb, send forth
Hymns full of wonder to the listening spheres?
Bringest thou the deadly pestilence, to strike
The wicked with a curse, or fill with joy
And benediction the meek souls who see
In every thing the sweetest providence?
Or bring'st thou red-eyed war, or famine gaunt,
To whip the selfish world, and show vain man
The finest palace is a Jonah's gourd?
Courier of God! Mysterious messenger!
That, through the wilderness of shining worlds
And countless suns, threadest thy wayless way!
Thou hast an answer fit for every one;
Evil to evil minds, and good to good,
As suns that quicken life smite too with death.

BRIAR CLIFF COLLEGE
SIOUX CITY, IOWA

The conscience-stricken, fevered, dying wretch
Sees but a fury in thy flaming hair,
By demons sent, to scourge him into night.
The shallow brain in thy eccentric haste
Sees a fine type of progress, and affirms
To-morrow will be wiser than to-day.
Another sees in thee the power of Him
Who sent thee on thy errand—and alone
Doth know its import—he believes that all
Man sees or hears, from pipe of morning bird
To thy strange wandering fire, is but one web
That none may break from, that a meaning dwells
In every sign of heaven that reaches earth,
And he is favored who can read aright.

Lower and lower, like a meteor stone,
Down through the yellow twilight—thou art gone.

LIMBUS INFANTUM.

I dreamed that through the air,
Half swooning, to another land I came,
A world unknown it was, without a name,
It held nor joy, nor care.

Like a calm ocean floor
Where the wind stirs not, nor the trembling star
E'er drops its silver light, there stretched afar
A plain without a shore.

And on that plain were spread
White, cold, and motionless, without complaint,
Or sigh, or look of woe, or murmur faint—
The unbaptizèd dead!

No day, no night had they;
Twilight, without its hope of sun or moon,
And a vague mist from some unseen lagoon
Hung over them for aye.

Though life was there in part,
Silence, forever, like a frozen bird,
Spread her congealèd wings, and never heard
The beating of a heart.

And one I knew was there;
For through the lids I saw her eyes below,
Like violets covered with untimely snow.
I knew her golden hair.

O, pale and voiceless dove!
Her mother's tears lay on her cheek, alas!
And on her brow, like breath upon a glass,
My last, last kiss of love.

I could nor weep nor pray,
My tongue refused to speak her sainted name,
When, lifted upwards like a struggling flame,
I reached and blessed the day.

TO A BIRD IN CHURCH.

[PALM SUNDAY.]

What seekest thou, forlorn, bewildered bird?
Beneath this temple's roof what seekest thou?
No living foliage invites thee here,
Nor pendant bough,

Nor sparkling stream that leaps among the stones
Then stops to mirror heaven on its breast,
Nor seeds, wind-scattered, nor the down and moss
To build thy nest.

Perhaps the storm without hath 'frighted thee;
The drifting of yon gloomy mass of cloud,
With horrid threads of fire, and deafening peals
Of thunder loud.

So in thou fliest, to where, before her Son,
The Virgin Mother kneels, most fair to see,
Her garments blue and white—emblems of truth
And purity.

And higher still, to where the Almighty Dove,
Forever blessed, spreads his azure wings,
Tunest thy simple pipe; then, overcome
With splendor, clings,

Trembling and panting, where the orient light,
Flowing through panes of crimson, blue and gold,
Streams in and all around in many a bright
And dazzling fold.

Too bright for thee, who with grey nature dwells,
And for relief thine eye is cast below
Upon the purple-muffled crucifix—
Our weal or woe.

On that thou lightest, but, alas! for thee
Earth holds a curse, and peace is short-lived here
Even for a guileless bird: our cunning strength
Has taught thee fear.

And though from swinging censer there ascend
Volumes of incense as the palms are blest,
The fresh green branches to thy wearied wings
Can give no rest.

Yet, while the blackness gathers 'round about,
Stay thou. Wait till the heavy portals ope
Upon the smiling sky that lies beyond,
Like dreams of hope.

We wait the moving of that sullen door,
The dark division of our mystic life,
Whose spring, by unseen angel's finger touched,
Ends earthly strife.

We, too, like thee by storms and darkness 'frighted,
And clouds of wrong—where the swift fire of thought
Descends, servant to Sin—have hasted hither
And shelter sought;

And with a feeble wing have tried to rise,
And with a twilight eye essayed to scan
The mighty Faith, so broad, so deep, so high—
God's love to man!

And, dazzled with its splendor and its power,
Its love, its meekness, its munificence,
Have found with humbled, yet with grateful hearts,
Our insignificance.

I'LL WEEP NO MORE.

The fount that holds my tears is dry,
  I'll weep no more! I'll weep no more!
Time was not given to mourn and sigh,
  And count our sorrows o'er and o'er.

I'll laugh and sing my songs of joy;
  I'll plant, and build, and keep me gay;
Nor let the past, with cold alloy,
  Intrude upon the glad to-day.

So thought I, and towards the sky—
  The blue, eternal sky—I turned;
But there the color of her eye
  I found, and straight my grief returned.

Down dropped my gaze the earth to seek,
  Where, at my feet, a rose had blown,
And there, the color of her cheek—
  Leaving her pale—had thither flown.

I turned aside; the autumn leaves
  Were whirled in clusters through the air,
Then, falling meekly, 'neath the eaves
  They rested, like her golden hair.

So, though I neither weep nor sigh,
  Mine eyes cannot refuse to see,
The broken fragments round me lie
  Of one who was so dear to me.

ASPIRATION.

What is sunshine, what is dew,
  Gentle rain, or balmy air?
Herbs and weeds, as well as you,
    Get their share.
What is clothing, shelter, food?
  Birds and beasts, with little care,
In the field or pathless wood
    Find their share.
What is treasure, gems and gold?
  Can they have a charm for thee?
Shallow men, and women bold
    Rich may be.
What the idle breath of fame,
  On the idle lips of men?
Soon, like withered leaves on flame,
    Cold again.
Wilt thou be content with this
  Which the birds and weeds enjoy?
Cheat thyself, and call it bliss,
    Delight and joy?
What is shared by men unjust
  Cannot be the highest prize;
From thy feet shake off the dust,
    And higher rise!
Human wisdom, vain and proud,
  Can but hide the light of love,

As the changeful, drifting cloud
The sun above.
From the mountain's crown of snow
Earth is wider seen, 'tis true,
But the heavens darker grow
To the view.
Wealth and knowledge, fame and power.
So tempting to the fools of time,
Fail to purchase for one hour
The height sublime,
Where sits enthroned the higher gift
Of Charity, and Hope, and Faith,
Which soothe, sustain, and guide, and lift
O'er life and death.
Oh! more than sunshine, food or praise,
Or aught this fevered world can give,
Aspire to; and to Christ upraise
Thine eye and live!

MAY.

Summer once more is here!
April hath laughed, or wept itself away,
And in its place the welcome-footed May
Gladdens the opening year.

Among her sunny hair,
Twined with fruit blossoms, naked, sweet, and new—
The fragrant hyacinth and iris blue—
Compose a garland fair.

A robe of tender green
Tied 'round her girdle with fresh violets,
Mixed with forgotten flowers the streamlet wets,
About her form is seen.

And in her hand she bears,
Half filled with dew, a gold-mouthed tulip cup,
Which, if one look in ere the sun be up,
He loses half his cares.

For, Hebe-like, she brings
Wine of the morning from the springs of peace,
Whose calm shall soothe the day, and will not cease
When night hath closed her wings.

Eyed like the azure dove,
And showers of lilies from her fingers white
Drop on the earth and sprinkle it with light
To catch the dews of love.

O lady of our heart,
I sing of May, that I may sing of thee.
Dearer than Hope's own month which now we see.
And brighter far, thou art.

JUNE.

Ah! placid days of June!
You see the lilies of the valley born,
You see the dew-drops on the springing corn,
And drink them all ere noon.
For you the wilding rose
Opens her blushing bosom to the light;
For you, from clover-fields of green and white,
The honied fragrance flows.
For you, yon stream glides on,
Bearing thy cloudless skies upon its breast;
The picture of a soul by love possessed,
Gentle, and deep, and strong,
That, having wandered far,
Dashed over rocks, and sunk in pools of woe,
Is led at last through meadows green to flow
By some blest guiding star.
In the cool Indian trail,
For you the small dove sits with lustrous eyes,
And seems naught less than bird from paradise
Until we hear it wail,
And then it speaks of earth,
A chastened echo, exquisite and low,
To hollow voices of the heart, whose woe
Finds words as rude as mirth.
O, lady, ever fair!
That I may sing of thee, I sing of June;
But weak the words, and harsh, alas, the tune
That springs 'midst pain and care.

PRIDE.

Red rose the sun upon Culloden Moor,
  Then hid behind the gloomy clouds his head;
  The budding heath bent down beneath the tread
Of stubborn clansmen from their mountains hoar,
Which, ere the morn should pass, bedewed with gore,
    Would be their bed.

Untamed by want, undaunted by the foe,
  Old Scotia's sons prepare them for the fight;
  The tartans wave, the broadswords flash in light,
The savage, screaming pipes the pipers blow,
And in the stir their bosoms throb and glow
    With stern delight.

Sullen, upon the left, with muttered words,
  The brave McDonalds stand with cold disdain;
  The right was ever theirs on battle plain,
And so they hack the heather with their swords,
Nor will they move to strike the southern hoards
    For loss or gain.

In vain with bursting heart their agèd chief
  Essays to lead them. Then, with heavenward eyes,
  "My children have forsaken me!" he cries,
And rushing wildly on a gathered sheaf
Of bayonets, to still his mighty grief,
    He falls, and dies!

The day is lost! The broken clans have fled.
  The chivalry of ancient Caledon,
  Now but remembered 'mong the past and gone—
That fatal day was scattered, hunted, dead;
Which might, but for the pride that Satan bred,
    The field have won.

Oh, warrior, on this rugged field of time!
  Whose cause is Truth, whose sword is sharp and good,
  Stand'st thou upon the left, in sullen mood,
To beat the air like these in this my rhyme?
Think of it now, ere yet thy morning's prime
    Set not in blood.

The day will pass; and, whether high or low,
  Esteemed or scorned, thy place may be, death smites
  Alike right wing and left, and him who fights,
And him who fights not, and our victory
Is incomplete till pride shall in us die,
    For love of rights.

SUNSET.

Down goes the crimson sun, and, as he falls,
The gathering clouds, all plashed with bloody light,
Lean over him and catch his dying smile—
A smile that speaks of triumph and of joy;
Like some victorious chieftain in a pool
Of his own gore, with just enough of life
To hurl a handful of his shining spears,
An answer to his death wound, and then close
His heavy eyelids like a demi-god!

And high upon the battlemented walls
The silver moon, with one attendant star,
Looks like his lady, sorrowful and pale,
With one child near—her loveliest and last.
Calm as the deepest grief, the widowed queen
Slowly descends, and bright and brighter glows,
In his departing glory, till she sinks
Into the yawning tomb of mountain clouds
Which, like the gloomy grandeur of the grave,
Lie piled in ridges betwixt earth and heaven.

Come forth, ye hosts celestial, and watch
One night above these most illustrious dead.
Peer through the murky atmosphere of earth
O'er the horizon, with your reddened eyes!

Rise from yon beds of faint and tender green,
And from the hazy dwellings where the strife
Of myriad brightnesses a girdle weaves
Of light like pearl, for deep immensity,
Or from the fields of azure, or far blue,
And heal the air with spherèd requiem.
And in my soul, that like a sea-shell lies
Upon the barren beach of time, let fall
One wandering cadence of the wondrous song,
That in its vaulted chambers I may keep
The prisoned echo when the music dies.

THE DATURA.

[A FLOWER THAT BLOOMS AT SUNSET.]

Lovely Datura, the great sun is sinking.
Soon in the twilight the shadows will fail,
Hesperus, herald of evening, is shining,
Open thy blossoms so pure and so pale.

Now when the moon, like a sickle of silver,
Reaping a harvest of light from the west,
Glows through the purple haze brighter and brighter,
Now, when the voice of rude labor finds rest,

Unlock the casket, and scatter the fragrance,
Open the bosom that modesty sealed
All through the garish day; fainting to see thee,
Alone to the stars be thy beauty revealed.

All the night long thou wilt smile through the darkness,
Emblem of Hope, shining brightest in gloom,
Day flowers are fair, as friends in prosperity,
Thou, like a lamp hanging over the tomb.

Yet thou art nothing with all thy surroundings,
Save as adornment for her who from me
Claims every verse that I write as a tribute,
So at her beautiful feet I lay thee.

THE SEA SHELL.

A little girl sits silent at her play.
With wondering eyes, and listening mouth and ear,
And forehead fair as e'er was formed of clay,
O'er which the careless sunny ringlets play—
What does she hear?

Gazing on nothing—as a poet might
If thoughts of fearful beauty filled his mind,—
Her face turned up in such a trustful light—
Surely those azure eyes, so soft and bright,
Cannot be blind!

Ah, now I see! Her rosy fingers hold
A shell, brought from some Island of the Blest,
'Round whose cool shore the sapphire waves are rolled,
A pearly shell, with crimson, green and gold
Upon its breast.

Look, for a moment! In its spiral cave
What wealth of pure and tender beauty lies.
As if some orb concealed rose on the wave,
And all its bosom tremulous should lave
With matchless dyes.

And now she holds it to her ear again,
And listens, as a lover for the song
Of his beloved, to those strange sounds that wane
And swell—weird, wandering murmurs of the main—
Its vaults along.

Dear, simple child! Now let me be like thee!
And for a shell the world will suit my soul.
Its wondrous beauty let me feel and see,
And on mine ear the eternal melody
Of heaven shall roll.

A WOUNDED DOVE.

Alas, poor, panting thing!
Huddled 'mong common weeds to pine and die,
Unseen, unsoothed by any kindred eye
To which thy heart might cling.

So voiceless in thy pain!
Thy bosom flutters like a dying child;
From broken wing and breast, in startings wild,
Quick drops the ruddy rain.

Ah! that man's life should seek
Thy death! That he should use his might to mar
A form so beautiful, and quench the star
Within thine eye so meek!

He never heard thy voice
Who struck thee down with his far-reaching power,
Else he had left thee in thy beechen bower,
And let thy mate rejoice.

For, sweet as holiday
With one we cherish, came thy simple tune,
Waking the stillness of the air in June
To plaintive melody.

Thy murmured notes no more
Through silken leaves and pendant boughs shall come
To cheer the weary heart that wanders home;
Thy sinless life is o'er.

ST. JOHN, EVANGELIST.

[WRITTEN DURING THE CONSECRATION OF ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL.]

Beloved disciple of the Lord of Love!
Virgin Evangelist of Virgin's Son!
O, earliest bud upon the Mystic Vine,
Still budding virgins! bend thy haloed head,
Look down and see the spoils that Love has won!

Two thousand years, on wings of cloud and flame,
Their tragic course have well nigh flown since thou,
Leaning thy youthful head on God's own breast,
Like lily resting on a peaceful lake,—
Or starry drop upon a crystal spring,—
Saw'st the dark traitor's hand dip in the dish
As friend with friend, while hell was in his heart.

Two thousand years since, with prophetic fire,
Thy eagle spirit soared beyond the clouds
Among the dazzling splendors of the sun,
And told of that which has but *now* begun;
And backward swept through gulfs of countless years
To things before the day-star—for the power
To utter that sublime, immortal strain,
"In the beginning was The Word—The Word
Was with God—The Word was God Himself!"

O, guileless one! untarnished innocence,
Courage, and constancy and love are thine;
Fit one to tend the mother of our Lord,
Fit one to be her first adopted son,
Fit one to soothe love-sorrow-laden heart
With Jesus' love reflected back from thee!

True love alone is brave; thy soul sincere,
Touched by the finger of the God of Truth,
Would pass with joy through boiling oil to death;
And, harder still, could tread this thorny life
A hundred years in purity of heart.

True love alone abides and works and wins;
From Parthian plains, and Patmos lone and wild
Thy "thunder" rolls along and wakes the world,
And, stretching broadly to the setting sun,
The all-embracing love that lights the stars,
That all-sufficing love from out thy lips,
Will bind this ruined earth with flowers divine,
When man (the circle of his race complete)
Shall rise to where no sun shall ever set.
Virgin evangelist of Virgin's Son,
Look down and see the spoils which Love has won!

LAKE MONONA.

[BOAT SONG.]

O'er the lake the breeze is sweeping,
Bearing, on its fragrant wings,
Joys that set old care asleeping
Down among forgotten things.
Here, upon Monona's bosom,
Ah! what health and hope arise!
Round our prow is sparkling gladness,
In our wake all sadness dies.

From the verdant, shady margin,
Songs of summer birds we hear;
Heaven's blue dome is all above us,
And below reflected clear.
Sweet is nature's wordless music,
Yet her song is scarce divine;
Why? She is content with water,
Never knew the taste of wine!
Sweet is nature's worldess music,
Sweeter, had she tasted wine!

Rest awhile, and let our boat glide
As she may, on *Fairy Lake;*
Quit the rudder and move forward,
And in moderation take—
Take the blessings Heaven has lent us,
Snatch from toil these halcyon days;
Dear are grateful hearts to heaven,
And to heaven be all the praise!
Dear are grateful hearts to heaven,
And to Heaven be all the praise!

TWILIGHT.

Slow sinks the light 'neath the western horizon,
  Barred by long clouds of the somberest hues;
Hushed is the song of the bird in the maple,
  The rose-blooms hang wet with the gathering dews;
Deep in the heart of the primeval forest
  The wind, sunk to sleep on a moss pillow, lies;
Now 'tis the hour when, O, mother of Jesus,
  We turn to the light of thy beautiful eyes.

Faintly the stars from the deep are emerging,
  The dragon's lone howling, the bat's muffled flight,
And the low wizard croon of the reeds by the river,
  Fill the woods, and the glooms, and the air with affright.
Outcasts and wanderers on the lone desert,
  Far, far away seems the country we prize;
Trouble around us and sorrow within us,
  O, turn upon us those beautiful eyes.

Send thou a foretaste of heaven to visit
  Our bosoms with peace; and by faith let us see
And hope for the time when, with fetters unloosened,
  We live with the "Fruit of thy womb" and with thee.
Pity our darkness, O, Gate of the morning!
  See! our dim day in obscurity dies;
Shield us this night, and in death's gloomy valley
  O, turn upon us thy beautiful eyes.

THE ABSENT ONE.

Oh, let me think once more of thee!
The early violets are seen,
The trodden grass again is green,
Again the warm south winds are free.
The many-folded silken buds
Are loosened by the sun and rain,
The trees hold up their hands again,
And Beauty walks our savage woods.
The swift-winged pigeons through the air,
Like long faint ripples on the sea,
Come north again; but not for thee
Do buds unfold, or skies grow fair.

The song of birds, the song of streams,
The new pulsations of the heart,
The love of nature and of art,
The re-resolves, the waking dreams—
All come again with April's gleams;
But thou, whose life was with the spring
A sweet accordance, ne'er can fling
Thine eyes' blue radiance here, it seems.
I dare not mourn—yet thought will take
A sober tint, a flight subdued,
And now and then will sit and brood
On things like thee for thy dear sake.

The bud is finer than the bloom,
  The dawn is finer than the day.
  And sweeter is the month of May
Than when the year is near its tomb.
The thought, new-born, that seems our own,
  The spring new-found among the stones,
  And young Love's trembling, whispered tones
Of words half uttered, and withdrawn—
For Hope dwells with them; and afar
  She points towards the distant hills
  Where busy fancy paints and fills
Each expectation like a star.

MILWAUKEE BAY.

Let Naples boast her azure bay,
  Or Bengal, 'neath perpetual noon;
Let Mormon Turks, with opium drugged,
  Snore to the waves of Scanderoon.
For wild Biscay I do not care,
  Or strands remote, however gay—
Let me but live beside the fair
  And beautiful Milwaukee Bay.
    Milwaukee Bay! Milwaukee Bay!
    Now gleaming in the eye of day;
    By sun, or moon, or starlight ray,
    I love thee, fair Milwaukee Bay!

'Twas love that formed Milwaukee Bay—
  The earth, enamored of the wave
Stretched out her dusky arms afar,
  And won, and kept her lover brave.
'Tis love that bids the waters lave,
  And kiss the shore in starry spray,
And murmured music evermore—
  For love I praise Milwaukee Bay!
    Milwaukee Bay! Milwaukee Bay!
    Now gleaming in the eye of day;
    By sun, or moon, or starlight ray,
    I love thee, fair Milwaukee Bay.

For haply at her window now,
A lady sits, of soul so true;
Love in her heart, peace on her brow,
And purer than the morning dew,
Perhaps she sings the song I love—
Perhaps her eyes now eastward stray—
Her voice is like the turtle dove—
Her eyes—they shame Milwaukee Bay!
Milwaukee Bay! Milwaukee Bay!
Now gleaming in the eye of day;
By sun, or star, or moonlight ray,
I love thee, fair Milwaukee Bay!

Ah! what is fame, or wealth, or power,
Without the healing joys of home?
For these we stem the stormy wave;
For these to distant shores we roam.
Then, as our keel glides through the deep,
This song shall cheer us on our way;
We sing the joys of steadfast love,
We sing of fair Milwaukee Bay!
Milwaukee Bay! Milwaukee Bay!
Now gleaming in the eye of day;
By sun, or moon, or starlight ray,
I love thee, fair Milwaukee Bay.

Personal Odes and Sonnets

ALAN THE DURWARD.

Much worn by exile, war and care,
Lord Alan on his death-bed lay,
And called his children round him there,
Expecting soon to pass away.

"I have no son—come, lassies, near!
I think it likely I maun dee;
Within my heart you three are ain—
Just like the Blessed Trinity.

I leave you wealth to keep you weel;
But yet, if married, mind, my fame
In this way you shall keep alive:
Make all your husbands take your name.

Your mither you will ne'er forget,
She was the sister of the King—
I see your eyes already wet;
No tear to mine her name can bring.

For surely she is where no grief
Her happy bosom ever knows—
And yet the nuns still pray for her
In Mary's convent at Montrose.

For years I have been done with hate;
I could take Haco by the hand
Kindly, and his Norwegian crew—
But—let them bide in their ain land.

I'm awful sleepy—so I am;
When I am gone you'll pray for me—
Wrap my thick plaid about my feet—
May God Almighty bless you three!

TO MY MOTHER.

As bends the lily to the earth
  From which to light and life it sprung,
  So I will bend with faltering tongue,
And speak of her who gave me birth;
And, as the dewdrops from the flower
  Are scattered by the morning breeze,
  So—what are left—I scatter these
Poor drops, when touched by memory's power.
Ah! mother mine! though now no more,
  My words, perchance, can reach thine ear,
  Or pierce to that all-radiant sphere
Where mortals lose the days of yore,
So full and round is present bliss;
  Yet I will write these lines to thee,
  Late and unworthy though they be,
And soothe my saddened soul in this.
So much of fervent love unpaid—
  The fitting time to pay it lost,
  So much of toil, and care, and cost
I see, since thou wert lowly laid,
That, thinking of the time that's dead,
  I seem to see thine image rise
  And cast on me those thoughtful eyes,
I seem to hear what thou hast said.

Whitened by threescore years and ten,
  That little lock of silver hair
  Hangs o'er a forehead pale with care,
Which here I ne'er shall kiss again;
But while for me the flowers bloom,
  And scatter leaves on Mother earth,
  I'll not forget thy patient worth,
Which God hath placed beyond the tomb.

"SOLOMO."

The dawn springs slowly through the eastern sky,
It turns the fleecy clouds to isles of gold,
It strikes the cross on John's Cathedral spire,
And all the palaces that rise around;
Then o'er the bosom of Lake Michigan
The quivering bars of many-colored light
Break into starry tear-drops; far away
The waters murmur to the pebbly shore
Of something lost, that can return no more!

The flags droop half-mast on the harbored ships,
The bells toll solemnly from many a tower,
The grateful city sends her thousands forth
To pay the last sad tribute to his dust
Who planted her; for, in one stricken room
Lies powerless and still a mighty frame
That once enclosed a warm and generous heart,
Now heedless all of tears or sobs of woe—
The voiceless ashes of old "Solomo!"

'Twas meet that he should die where swarthy chiefs
Could gaze upon the face of their tried friend,
Where silent squaws could through the darkness steal
To breathe a prayer and kiss his honored head,
That they should bury him and think him theirs;
And it was meet that he should here be brought
For his loved children and the city's sake
That he twice honored, and twice buried he,
For here his like we ne'er again shall see.

Ye men with glittering steel and measured tread,
He was a soldier, for he was a man!
Ye men who battle with the elements,
He was like you, and dared the elements!
Ye veteran pioneers of fertile brain
And iron arm, he was your elder brother!
Bear ye the body into God's own house,
Where lately too was borne his dusky wife—
Before that altar where he knelt in life.

There let him rest a space, until the Church
Read her appointed prayers above her dead,
And sprinkle holy water on the pall,
And burn some grains of blessed olibanum,
And let the prisoned soul of music burst
In terror through the *"Dies Irae"* hymn,
And from the dead unto the living speak,
And point with steady finger 'yond the grave,
Through His strong love who came the world to save!

The rites are paid, the eulogy is said,
The secret prayers for his soul's repose
Have upward sped on wings of faith and love,
The lights are out, the long procession moves,
And strains of mournful music swell and fade
Upon the air, and flashing in the sun
Up the far streets the bayonets are seen;
The nodding hearse—of which Death makes a throne—
Is out of sight, and "Solomo" is gone!

THE SOUL OF BURNS.

1857.

In that dear land, remembered and beloved,
That lies far east, beyond the heaving wave,
A child was born—the firstling of his sire—
  Within a cottage built of clay,
    When earth was cold and white with snow,
  Near the "Auld Kirk of Alloway,"
    A hundred years ago.

He lived, he loved, he sung—alas! he died;
Yet, though the cold earth's bosom keeps his dust,
His songs still breathe the old immortal fire—
  The fire of love and patriot pride,
    The fire to scorch hypocrisy,
  The sympathy—warm, deep and wide,
    The scorn of wrong and tyranny.

His soul, now free from stains of earth and time,
This very morning, on the day-spring rose,
And looked once more upon that famous land—
  That glorious land that gave him birth,
    Where heather blooms, and fir-trees wave—
  That land of song and honest worth,
    Which Bruce and Wallace bled to save.

And, unencumbered by this mortal coil,
His rapid glance swept o'er from sea to sea,
The hills and vales of Caledonia,
  And saw, within that space so brief,
    The light of many a name renowned—
  Poet, philosopher and chief—
    Whose fame has reached earth's utmost bound.

And, in the ancient cities of his land,
He saw his countrymen pass to and fro
In preparation for a festival.
  He saw his own sons with a smile;
    He marked the true, the gifted, all
  Hastening with joy o'er many a mile
    To keep his first centennial.

"Oh, Time!" he said, "physician of all ills!
Impartial Judge! Avenger of all wrongs!
Slow Winnower, that parts the wheat and chaff!
  Thy breath sweeps all the froth away,
    But spares the true wine, clear and bright;
  Thy footstep hides the worthless clay,
    Thy hand lifts precious things to light.

"Forgive me that, when subject to thy reign,
I stooped to murmur at my low estate!
The gift of Poesy me heaven has shown
  Required no higher sphere than mine
    To feel and see the heart of man,
  And woman—love and beauty's shrine—
    Or Nature's wondrous face to scan.

"Man's private, puny, grasping hand can ne'er
Enclose or hide the earth, or air, or sea,
With all their glooms and glories manifold;
The heart lies open to the poor,
And all its secrets poets tell,
Bring thoughts from heaven's starry floor,
And images from earth and hell.

"The pride of ancient and illustrious blood,
The mighty power of station and of gold,
Are weak and fleeting to that magic spell
The poet casts upon the mind,
And earth would be without a bard
If man could *pay* for song and hymn—
True genius is its own reward!"

Across the Atlantic, then, he winged his flight,
And paused above the cities of the east;
And there, the greatest names of this great land—
Admirers of the Scottish muse—
In speech, and toast, and melody,
Were pouring forth their strains profuse,
In honor of his memory.

Did he remember then his years of toil?
His nights of sorrow, and his days of grief?
Or, for his frailties the sharp-toothed regret?
O no! they all had passed away,
And in their stead were peace and rest,
And sunshine of eternal day,
And hallowed joy among the blest.

Still further westward flew the soul of Burns;
Upon a rack of sunset clouds he came.
And lo! he stays above this gathering here!
He now rejoices in our mirth,
He listens to our harmless glee,
And quaffs a wine, not found on earth—
The wine of Immortality!

SCOTT.

1871.

The mother of illustrious sons
O'er all their deeds in fancy runs,
And sweetly smiles to hear them praised;
She whispers, "Yes! I gave them birth,"
And those who praise, tho' void of worth,
Are in her estimation raised.

So 'tis with Scotland on this day;
Her *mutch* is tied with ribbons gay,
And all the world perforce must see
She is not barren yet, tho' old;
For here is Walter Scott the bold—
A stalwart son of hers was he.

No sickly sentimentalist,
But with good health and fortune blest
He walked this earth with solid tread;
He had the power to use his powers,
He made his genius build his towers
And plant his trees and bake his bread.

And tho', as wisest men believe,
No mortal man can ever weave
A lasting bond with acres wide,
An immaterial domain
Of feeling heart and thinking brain
Is his, long after he has died.

His mansion by the Abbot's ford,
Of which again a Scott is lord,
May fall to ruin and decay;
And, crumbling dust upon his dust,
As earth to earth forever must,
Old Dryburgh pass away.

But Scottish pilgrims yet unborn
Shall come at eve and dewy morn
And list the sounds he loved to hear,
To which his latest sense gave heed—
The gentle murmurs of the Tweed,
The dying song that soothed his ear.

And thousands, too, in distant times,
'Neath other stars, in far off climes,
Shall something of old Scotia ken
Only by his sweet minstrel lays,
His tales of love and battle frays
In lowland vale and highland glen.

But we who know the lochs and streams
That mingled with our early dreams,
Who oft have watched the skylark soar,
Who oft have trod the misty hills,—
O, how the "Northern Wizard" thrills
Our hearts with memories of yore!

"Perfervidum ingenium
Scotorum," through all time to come,
May it still live and glow and burn
In noble deed and pictured page!
That Caledon, from age to age,
Oblivion and disgrace may spurn!

Her thistle and her purple heath,
The while we stay the moon beneath,
By us shall never be forgot;
Her golden flowers of broom and whins,
Or that with his her name begins—
All hail, to Scotland; land of Scott!

CAMPBELL.

1877.

Last but not least of the illustrious three
On Caledon's maternal bosom nursed,
This festive night is set apart for thee,
In order last, in purer fame the first.
Who knows thee not? who has not thrilled to hear,
In life's wild springtide, from thy peerless lyre,
"Ye Mariners of England," or the cheer
Near Elsimore, nor shared thy patriot fire?

Yet heaven forbid that in his high abode
One star be dimmed that thou may'st brighter shine!
Strange is each poet's pathway, and ne'er trode
But once—as vessels plow the ocean's brine;
The waves flow o'er, and no succeeding prow
Shall ope the liquid furrow like the last,
From other skies the gale or breeze shall blow,
And rend the sail, or gently strain the mast.

Silver and gold are gold and silver still,
Nor less, nor more, without comparative;
The azure sky, the green of yonder hill,
Both in a separate beautifulness live.

Who would the sapphire, or the emerald,
With ruby or with amethyst compare?
Let poets, as the precious stones, be held
Each in his sphere unique, and ever rare.

But this we know: Only true fame can bide
If purity preserve the work from stain;
That soon or late oblivion's slime must hide
The praise of cruelty, or sordid gain.
Oh! if within the poet's beating heart
There burn not hatred for all sin and wrong,
And love for all that's fair, and high, and just,
No "oil of cedar" can preserve his song.

If from beyond the boundary could come
The spirits of the minstrels, and each look,
With his now deathless eyes, aghast and dumb,
Upon the contents of his gilded book,
How many pages would they wish to blot—
Inane, impure and false, that give to crime
A cunning varnish, license to the sot,
And height to idols of a dwarfish time!

That verse which would embalm the human beast,
That verse which joins the loud and brutal cry,
Lauding the victor tyrant at his feast
Of prosperous wickedness, must surely die!
But thine would live. Just indignation's flame
Springs in thy heart and burns along thy words,
As the crowned robbers, without ruth or shame,
Divide the bleeding Poland with their swords.

"Pleasures of Hope" unblotted would remain,
Thy "war-worn Soldier" 'neath the starry sky
Would dream of "Home"; thy Patriot not in vain
For his loved country cheerfully would die.
Thy "Flower of Love" would bleed for ever more,
Thy "Erin's Exile's" lone lament we'd feel;
The "Combat deepen," and from mountains hoar,
Still stream the wizard "Warning of Lochiel."

Far on through time, thy fame, still fresh and young,
"The blue glens of that never vanquished land,"
(Whose Celtic fire through England's matchless tongue
Glows in thy strain), shall cherish and expand,
Till every soul, compassionate and true,
The honored name of Campbell shall revere;
As we this hour with joyful spirits do
Touch with pale light thy laurels, never sere.

*Aubrey de Vere.

TO FATHER MARQUETTE.

Though no stone mark the end of thy journey on
earth,
Though the spot be unknown where thy ashes repose,*
And the river obscure keeps the secret and dies,
Which the murmuring Michigan ne'er can disclose,
Yet we may not forget thee, disciple of Xavier!
Thy faith, and thy zeal, and thy labors of love
For the children who sat in the shadow of darkness,
Where error and night their dim labyrinths wove.

Though the name of the river "Conception" be lost,
To Mary Immaculate gratefully given,
Our gratitude lives, and the name may be found
Yet on earth, or be one of the rivers in heaven.
And we may not forget, other names of thy giving
Live still in this region, where plenty has smiled—
And now teems with new life—where the cross of the
Master
Was planted by thee, when a wilderness wild.

*This was written before Marquette's grave was found at Point St. Ignace.

Ah! no grave of the Huron, "fur-lined" is thy bed,
And no taper is burning above thy lone rest,
And the smoke of the incense has melted in air,
And the cross has sunk down and unseen on thy breast;
And if o'er the blue lake by the Indians who loved thee
Thy bones have been borne ere thy flesh knew decay,
The music that rose from the deep "De profundis"
Long since into silence has trembled away.

And no altar remains where was offered by thee,
On those shores unfrequented, thy last Sacrifice;
And the trees that hung over have mixed with the mould,
And the new forests spread their green roofs to the skies.
Yet the Names that were last on thy lips never perish,
Nor the love they impart to such spirits as thine,
Which (while pallor creeps after the fast-ebbing life-tide)
Can light up the soul with a rapture divine!

TO CHARLES GIFFORD.

Lover of perfectness in fruits and flow'rs!
  Again the nuts drop on the faded leaves,
  Again her frosty mist dim twilight weaves,
And day is shorten'd of her finest hours.

The time has gone when, ere the sun had dried
  From glowing roses morning's tears of love,
  You walked the garden, and around, above,
Saw food and beauty growing side by side.

Like wounded birds the leaves fall fluttering,
  That used to kiss each other with chaste breath,
  As the wind stirred them; and now yellow death
Sweeps them together with his dusty wing.

The drowsy snake to its long sleep retires,
  The grasshoppers are chaunting their last song,
  Far to the genial South the wild fowl throng,
And autumn lights his gold and crimson fires.

Not empty-handed hath he come—good hap!
  The fragrant load has broken down the boughs,
  Both Spring and Summer have redeemed their vows,
And Plenty, laughing, cannot hold her lap.

Thrice happy is the labor spent on earth!
  First, passeth full of hope the willing Spring;
Next, Summer doth her gorgeous treasures bring,
And Autumn rounds them into perfect worth.

So, full of hope, the stripling's heart beats fast;
  So, lavish manhood spends his noontide power;
  Then age mature sits in his russet bower
And gives us wisdom's fruit—the best and last.

Our hopes are now in the mysterious seed
  That, patient, waits the music of the Spring,
  When the full-hearted streamlets dance and sing,
From their enchanted, wintry bondage freed.

So, still and silent lie the seeds of thought,
  Gleanings from heaven, or earth with beauty crown'd.
  Ah! may we be at that last harvest found,
Laden with fruits that will not turn to naught.

GRAND DUKE ALEXIS.

Grand Duke Alexis, thrice welcome to visit us!
Look on this land which to Freedom was won!
Come to Milwaukee, whose large hospitality
Vies with the impartial light of the Sun.

Bleak are our shores with the blasts from the polar sea,
Fettered with fringes of ice are our lakes;
Bleaker by far are your mines of Siberia,
Where the lone heart of the patriot aches.

Grand Duke Alexis, how dear is the mother-tongue
His, the crushed Polack must now bid adieu;
Freedom to worship God—if that were dear to you,
John Sobieski preserved it for you.

Rest, Kosciusko! this land which thy chivalry
Holp to set free from a slope-headed slave,
Matins and Lauds sings to flatter the progeny
Of the oppressors of Poland, the brave.

Grand Duke Alexis, the "Autocrat" Oliver,
Fulsomly flatters thy country in thee;
Were I a Russian and not an American
I would suggest that he ask for his fee.

Woe to the land where a despot is idolized!
Sooner or later tyrannic desire
Crawls in the heart of some ruthless oppressor, for
Surely we grow like the thing we admire!

Grand Duke Alexis, still young and ingenuous,
Raised up on high 'neath a fortunate star;
May it be thine to urge justice and clemency;
We, with the Poles, will cry: "Long live the Tzar!"

DAWN.

(On the Death of an Infant.)

From a lower sunrise born
  Light is breaking
Through the eyelids of the morn.
  Earth, awaking,
Turns her face towards the light,
  All bright with dew,
Casts aside the mists of night,
  And lives anew.

But a weight upon her eyes—
  Ah! not like sleep—
And a darkness o'er her lies,
  So still and deep,
Which forbids to come again
  For her, on earth,
Dawn of day, or summer's rain,
  Or grief, or mirth.

Who would mourn when on her eyes
  Another dawn
Springs, brighter far than those which rise
  For bird or fawn?

Who would mourn a life so passed,
  Without a stain?
The spirit home, the door made fast
  'Gainst change, and pain.

Take this other little one,
  Mary, mother;
Jesus died—who is thy Son
  And our Brother.
He it was that took her hence,
  Out of love;
"Took her for her innocence,"
  To live above.

TO DR. J. V. HUNTINGTON.

I.

Pale, thought-worn wanderer from a foreign shore,
  What seekest thou beside the Pyrenees?
Thy native land beyond the Atlantic's roar
  Is grand, and fair, and sweet the western breeze,
Laden with perfume from the prairie flowers,
And from the shadowy forest's silent bowers.

Doth ruby wine-cup, festal song or dance,
  Lure thee so far towards these mountains' feet?
Lov'st thou the genial breath of sunny France?
  Doth youthful joy and poesy still beat
Within thy veins, as when thou cam'st of yore
To Europe, and enriched thee from her lore!

Or is it that the grim and frantic hand
  Of red-eyed slaughter, smeared with brother's blood,
Hangs dripping o'er thy once great happy land,
  Feeding the gloomy Dragon's hungry brood?
Was't this that struck thy heart and exiled thee,
Because thy country is not *one* and *free?*

Perchance in part this last. But I perceive
Thy graceful locks are thin on thy veined brow;
Thine eyes are hollow, and their shadows weave
  A dim veil o'er the fire that fades below;
  These temple walls, too finely formed for time,
Require a purer air, a brighter clime.

II.

The pilgrim laid him down to rest his limbs,
  The roads are rugged still for such as he;
The storms are darker, though the light beyond
  Is brighter far than duller eyes may see;
The angel of his life beside him kneels,—
Ah! let me not imagine what *she* feels.

The peace of Jesus seals his heavy eyes,
  And lifts his gifted spirit on its wings
Through mists of earth and clouds of many dyes,
  Afar, through unimaginable things,
Where mortal Fancy's feet have never trod,
And laid him in the bosom of his God!

And shall this bright transition make us mourn?
  The prisoner freed from fetters of the clay?
This gentle passage made across the bourne,
  This change from twilight to eternal day?
Alas! the cypress in our garden grows,
And human breath is drawn through human woes.

Death still is death to the poor beating heart,
  And changes all things 'round us. Let us weep!
Yet bring the flowers, ere summer all depart,
  And strew them gratefully above his sleep!
The rose of love, the lily, fair to see,
The scented thyme, and mystic "Rosemarie."

TO CAPTAIN BARRY.

This good November day is nearly o'er;
The sun is gone, and yet his glory fills
With a divine effulgence all the west,
And pours a yellow gleam across these hills.
Full many a new-made, grassless grave is here,
And many a group of mourners scattered 'round,
Each wishing that his sorrow may outlive
Whatever joy may on the earth be found.

Another tent within this silent camp
Must rise for thy long-lost remains. O, grief!
Here the poor remnant of thy band awaits
To do the last sad office for its chief.
The jewels of thy house, in mourning set,
Stand weeping near thine ashes; and I see
Some others that still love thee with a love
That stretches further than this boundary.

To bless thy body in its narrow house,
A Soldier of the Cross,* old, tried and good,
Is here to bid thee rest in peace and hope
Beneath the shelter of the Holy Rood.
Death is not death beside this Tree of Life!
A dark-robed angel sent from heaven is he,
Who, with a frowning look to those around,
Strikes off the chains and sets the captive free.

*Father Donahue.

And there thy gallant brethren of the sword,
  Steady and calm, though not unmoved at heart,
Send their close volleys o'er thy honored dust—
  A soldier's knell, at which the echoes start.
"Three more, my men!" "Make ready," "aim," and
    "fire!"
  Another of the fated "Guards" lies down
To rest this night, joining his company
  'Mong drifted Autumn leaves, all seared and brown.

Farewell! Along the forests and the hills
  The doubly thrice-awakened echoes die;
Twilight is spreading o'er us its dim veil,
  Like this dim veil of life 'neath which we lie;
The stars, emerging from the depths of space,
  Seem to rebuke us that we weep or smile
At anything this shifting world affords—
  Dear friend, I leave, and say, "Farewell, awhile!"

TO MY FIRSTBORN.

Dear firstling of my little flock,
In tribute to the Master paid,
By what sweet streamlet dost thou feed?
What field, love-blest and beauteous made?
In what fair sunlight, ne'er to fade
Or shadow need?

With trembling breath and sinking heart,
Hard was it for a father's tongue
To bid thy dear young soul, "depart!"
How hard, can ne'er be said or sung,
Or from the soul of sorrow wrung
By mimic art.

Again the dew is on thy feet—
Again appears the breaking morn—
Again thy lily body lies
All pallid, wasted and forlorn—
Again my heart with grief o'erworn
Within me dies!

O memory, break thy bitter wand!
O fancy, muffle up thy wings
And crouch within this gloomy hour,
Or waft me to the living springs
O'er which eternal glory flings
Its ceaseless shower!

There have the splendors clasped thy soul,
My son! O ever-blessed Faith,
That steps between us and despair,
And lights the very shades of death,
Lift up my spirit from the breath
Of this dark lair!

From life's dim, dusty solitude
I yearn, my child, to see thy face!
O, when this flickering pulse is dumb,
As I to thee said, "Go in peace!"
By filial love and Jesus' grace,
To me say, "Come!"

EMMA THERESA.

Death stole the color from thy cheek,
The lustre from thy azure eye—
Thy little words he stole away,
And wasted thee to pale and weak.
Perhaps he did all this to try
If we would wish thee still to stay.

Love sinketh not with sunken eyes—
Love paleth not with pallid lips—
Love grows not dumb with tuneless tongue,
Nor yet from waste and weakness flies;
And so, to light this dull eclipse,
A stronger love has only sprung.

He took thy breath and scattered it
Upon the thankless, greedy air;
His wintry fingers touched thy veins—
He touched not thee! Oh! No! nor yet
Our love, that makes thee still more fair,
And after time and death remains.

THECLA.

Where the rocks with sombre shadows
  Overhang the sparkling stream,
And the pine trees spread their branches,
  Ever fragrant, ever green,
Thecla oped her eyes of azure,
  Wondering, as in a dream,
What the tones of happy voices
  And the gleams of light could mean.

On her head the wave baptismal,
  Freeing her from sinful stain,
Duly flowed from hand anointed,
  And she took her place among
Pilgrims of the Cross, who journey
  Through the twilight and the rain
To the everlasting dwelling
  Where immortal souls belong.

Ruder sounds have not come near her
  Than the plaint of mourning doves,
Or the crystal fountain singing
  As it gushes o'er the stones,
Or the songsters of the forest
  Warbling forth their guileless loves,
Bleat of lambs or wild bee's humming,
  Or affection's gentle tones.

Earth hath made her destined circuit
  Twice around the central fire
Since the infant came to bless us;
  Now the music of her voice,
As she speaks the name of "Jesus,"
  Lifts our aspirations higher
Far than aught of earthly treasure,
  Makes our inmost souls rejoice.

O, sweet Mother of Our Savior,
  Shield her through the storms of time!
We are frail, but thou art mighty,
  Keep her innocent and holy,
Keep her soul from sin's dark wound,
  Till she reach the radiant clime
Where, with thee and sainted Thecla,
  Light and peace and love are found.

TO AUBREY DE VERE.

I.

As one who, breathing on a lower ledge,
  Hears the clear voice of some tried mountaineer:
  "Toil upward through the lower fogs! For here
The air is pure, and all Earth's azure edge
  With Heaven is mingling!" Even so, De Vere,
Thy soul to mine. Of thy *Patriciad*
All Eire and other lands will yet be glad
  And with the Saint his Poet too revere.
When Time shall winnow with his heavy wing
  The grain so mixed with chaff and poison-weed,
  Men will perceive and prize the precious seed
Which they—too often weeping as they fling
  Their pearls near swine—cast as a holy deed,
Who for base ends would never dare to sing.

II.

Aubrey de Vere the first, on Hastings' field
  Near Gulielmus, duke of Normandy,
  Whose brother-in-law he was, fought cheerfully
In the brave days of sword and spear and shield.

The Norman conquered England, for her good,
  Under permission of all-ruling Heaven,
  That in supremest peace sees nations riven
And sceptres snatched thro' spilth of human blood.
Upon a wider field—the entire world—
  A greater war uprolls its tidal wave;
  The standard of the Cross the true shall save—
Who strive against it to the dark are hurled.
Aubrey de Vere the last, more glorious far,
Fights on the side of Christ, the Conqueror!

TO COVENTRY PATMORE.

Poet of love, exalted, fervent, pure!
  Whose Mistress, Muse, and Angel Wife, are one,
  The primal song in Paradise begun
'Tis thine to sing again; and on the sure
Basis of adamantine truth, secure,
In tones and thoughts born of the beating heart
To build the lofty rhyme with perfect art
Which must beyond our loveless day endure.
  That in the holiest citadel of life
The love Divine may die, against maniknd
The poisoned shafts of hate from hell are sent;
  Yet all in vain where husband and where wife
Make melody like thine. Some day will find
True wedded dames to build thy monument.

GARCIA MORENO.

1873.

When one star only in the firmament
  Shines thro' the rent cloud of a gloomy sky
  The pilgrim hails it with a gladdened eye
And blesses Him by whom the light is lent;
  Even so, Moreno! from thy lofty tent
Between the Andes double mountain chain,
To cheer God's people upon hill and plain,
  The radiance of thy noble deeds is sent.
Than Incas clad in gold, O richer sure
  Art thou! sole civic ruler that has hurled
  A spear 'gainst sacrilege (while Satan curled
In rage his ashy lip). Thy acts so pure,
Longer than Chimborazo shall endure— —
  Yea! or the solid fabric of this world!

TO ALEX. MITCHELL.

Beauty and Genius, Wisdom, Swiftness, Fame,
And Strength and Riches,—all are gifts of God.
Of these, or some of these, the dullest clod
Feels love, or admiration, awe or shame;
The homage cannot be denied. Even hate,
That would dethrone the beauty, break the power,
Destroy the wealth, is but the dark and sour
Unwilling reverence for what is great.
Tho' every molehill has its use and room,
The mountain resting on his solid base,
His head serene, or dashed with thunder-gloom,
Strikes first and last man's heaven-directed face.
He who is raised on high is raised for good,—
Thy life has made this better understood.

TO J. H. DAHLMAN. (103 Years Old.)

Written While Painting His Picture.

Thou aged pilgrim, bending towards the goal
  Which all must reach who breathe this mortal air,
  What struggle, sorrow, wisdom, triumph, care,
Are stamped upon thy visage by thy soul!
The furrows of thy venerable head
  I with my feeble pencil try to trace,
  That Time thy image may not all efface,
But spare this likeness after thou art dead.
Four generations made their bow to thee,
  And passed into the dim forgetfulness;
Yet thy calm life, so beautiful to see,
  Is left—for filial piety to bless.
  And in thy face, as in a book, appears
  The light and shadow of a hundred years!

ELIZA ALLEN STARR.

Dear lady friend! though I have seen thee never,
I feel thy spirit of true Christian love
Striving through Art and Literature to move
The young-eyed souls to true and high endeavor:
Like patient mother-bird that spreads her wing
And flies to branches high above her brood,
That they may follow and have finer food
And learn to love the air, and soar and sing.
Blest be thy labor! Each one finds by thee
Her "Patron Saint" more brave and beautiful
Than she before had thought, and aims to be
Braver and humbler and more dutiful,—
So violets grow sky-blue, and to the light
The lilies looking clothe themselves in white.

GENOA.

Genova la Superba—still renowned,
Revered by every true American
As birth-place of the brave and pious man
Who under Providence the New World found.
This day, the "Fourth of Luglio," here we stand
In joy beside his splendid monument,
With gratitude and with a high content
With him who ordered it and him who planned.
Land of my loved ones! from this spot I hail thee,
By the Atlantic and Pacific laved!
O, may the wisdom of thy sons ne'er fail thee,
Nor thy vast harvests, for the millions saved!
This figure looks as if he saw thee now,
Sunlight of triumph beaming from his brow.

ON THE DEATH OF JUDAS.

From the Italian.

That hour when Judas, filled with madness hung
Upon the tree, his guardian demon came
With rapid flight, confronted him, and flapped
And twitched his red and smoky wings,
And by the cord that hung about his neck
He swung him down into the boiling ditch.
Scarce had the demon snatched him in his claws
Before his flesh burned and his vile bones hissed.
And having reached the fiery whirlpool, lo!
Horrible Satan smoothed his wrinkled front,
Then in his arms he clasped the traitor wretch,
And with his bloody and black mouth, gave back
To him the kiss that he had given to Christ.

Christina

Montrose—The Poet's Birthplace

CHRISTINA.

CANTO I—INSIDE THE CHURCH.

In a far land, which I shall see no more,
A city stands, by roses and the sea
Encircled; on three sides the waves flow 'round,
Now o'er the wrinkled sand in mirthful play,
Now dashing on the rocks and rolling far
With hollow gurgling into low-browed caves
That darkly stretch for miles beneath the land;
And on the other, fields of roses bind
The city like a gem. Within that place
Young Hubert lived, and on that wrinkled sand
With splint of cedar driftwood he would trace
Her name whose image filled and fired his soul.
First love, the fount of sighs and poesy,
Had touched his heart and brain and lips with fire,
And thus the letters of her name he wove
In rhyme, and wrote them in the sand for love.

"Care—may it never mar thy brow!
Health—may it bloom upon thy cheek!
Roses without the thorns be thine!
I fain would with thy name some beauty twine,
So lovely art thou; but my words are weak
To paint thee as I view thee now
In my fond memory; thy large dark eyes—
Nor pen nor pencil gives their light divine—
Are windows of a soul whose smile is paradise!

"The envious tide will wash all this away,
But graven in my heart," he said, "that name,
Untouched by time, shall live. Lo! in the dawn
The morning star has faded, and the mist
Melts in the kindling blushes of the morn,
And, sleeping 'neath its sparkling coverlid,
The far-off bosom of the sea is kissed
By the o'erarching sky. Tattered and torn,
Like banners on the battlefield, the clouds,
Dabbled with blood and edged with burnished gold,
Back from the gateway of the sun are rolled,
And here, with ceaseless murmur, at my feet
The limpid water with his many tongues
Moistens the pebbles and the veined shells,
As oft I've done in childhood's wondrous hour,
Until they looked like flowers through morning dew.
But what are these to me? Sun, sea, and cloud,
With all their beauty, cannot give me rest,
Nor cool this burning fever in my breast.

"Last night I dreamed of her, and she was here;
She stood, it seemed, upon this shining sand,
Her forehead pale, but beautiful as morning,
And her long, weeping hair fell down like clouds
That stream their darkness over sunny hills;
Her bosom fluttered like a prisoned bird,
And from her lustrous eyes, so sweetly wild,
Awoke strange flashes, and a brighter hue
Suffused her olive cheek and pale rose lips.
The sky seemed stooping down to take her from me,

And clothe her with the ever-changing gold
And azure hangings of the tents of heaven;
The stars came out and plunged into the deep,
Where, far beneath, each found a trembling bride,
Then wheeled in charmed circles 'round the pole;
But, as I dared to take her by the hand,
My dream was broken—the sweet vision fled.

"And here she is not, as I might have known;
But a vague feeling moved my sleepless feet
To wander here, and speak of her aloud
Where none can hear me. I have read of some
That, like the fluttering moth, will dangle 'round
The objects of their love, irresolute,
And, blinded, burn their silken wings and fall;
But, as an arrow to its destined aim,
My soul, O, lovely one, would fly to thee,
Impatient of digression; piercing swift
Both space and time, and all the chains and bars,
The unseen network of our social state,
And even that hallowed modesty itself,
Which, like the moonlight pure, encircles thee,
And clasp thee to my heart.

"The favored savage
Sees by the river's marge his dusky bride,
And, with his soul on fire with all her charms,
He like a lion from the thicket leaps,
And bears her off in triumph to his bower.
The glorious knight of old rode 'neath the moon,

And from the castle walls, by cords of love
Let down, the sweetest burden filled his arms.
So would I seize to bless and shield thee ever,
For as the sun looks on the earth in spring,
And as the torrent from the mountain side
Sweeps to the deep and placid lake below,
So would I look and haste to thee, my love!

"Now swing the bells in the cathedral tower,
And now her gentle feet are on the pavement;
For, regular as is the Sacrifice,
The firstlings of the day she gives to God.
Now 'neath the budding maple trees she walks,
Now she ascends the steps, and as she glides
Through the great doorway, dim and arched and high,
She moves her pure sweet lips, and, whispering, says,
'Here will I enter, through thy mercy, Lord!'
Now in the little pool of water dips
Her lovely fingers, and upon her brow
She hangs a drop that sparkles like a gem,
And murmurs, 'Sprinkle me with hyssop, Lord!'
Why do I linger? In that hallowed place
I soon may steal some glimpses of her face."

Adown the valley of this stream that flows
Into the sea, the rolling waves of sound
Sent circling from the metal mouths afar
Upon the peaceful Sabbath morning air,
Float faster than the waters glide along,

And in yon dark ravine now wail and sigh
Like heart forlorn; move faintly trembling reeds
And lowly weeds that o'er the margin lean;
And now the very air apart is torn
As the loud burst of joy peals forth and calls
The startled echo from the dewy banks;
To Hubert's ear they speak of her alone,
For love can turn all sounds to joy or moan.

"This is the church, the house of God our Lord,
But now I seem like an unbidden guest;
I hesitate and linger 'round the door,
I do not wish to walk, yet cannot rest.
The 'Ite missa est' would please mine ear,
That I might see her stepping gently by,
Her lily fingers clasped about her book
And love's own shadow 'neath her drooping lids,
Then walk as with an angel by my side.
Oh, if there's anything on earth divine,
It is her sweet and strange unconscious look,
Where simple grace and beauty blend with worth,
Like precious jewel from the hidden mine,
That shines without the poor intent to shine."

And so he entered, filled with one sole thought,
But quickly felt abashed, and bent his knee
To Him whose presence awes the heart that beats
Too rapidly for things of mortal mould;
By one keen thought his love was cut in twain;
One part would die, the other live forever;

Earth would return to earth, her soul alone
Would triumph over time—he sighed and mused.
But ardent youthful passion seldom gives
Long time to fearful thought. The sighs he breathed
Soon danced into a song upon his lips,
Unheard by any, save his throbbing heart.

"Fearful it is to love that which must die,
Yet when beside thee I think not of death;
Mortal it is not—the heaven of thine eye,
Mortal it is not—thy musical breath!

"Fearful it is to love that which must fade,
Yet I will love thee were death at thy side;
Love thee in sunshine, and love thee in shade,
Thou crown of creation, my jewel, my bride!

"Time is unknown when thy hand is in mine,
Space by thy presence is full. And thy kiss!
There is something about it so pure and divine,
Which interprets the state in the regions of bliss."

The church is large; the morning sunlight streams
Through the stained glass and sprinkles all the floor
With colors fit to pave the floor of heaven.
The altar is pure white, just touched with gold,
Crowned with the eternal symbol of true faith,
Whereon the dying God our Saviour hangs;
His head droops low, as if he spoke to children,
His arms extend, as if to clasp the world!

And round his feet, sculptured by loving art,
Lie wrapped in wonder young-eyed cherubim.
The holy tabernacle stands beneath,
Enclasped most fittingly with passion-flowers
For suffering; and lilies pure and pale,
For innocence; roses for love divine,
With ears of wheat and clusters of the vine,
In whose elected substance the benign
And gracious Shepherd doth Himself enshrine!

A dark-haired priest, bent slightly, yet not old,
Takes off his upper vestment and kneels down;
His face, his gait, his attitude bespeak
A conscious and mysterious dignity,
An ardor that disturbs not his repose,
As if he said to God within his heart:

"Weak though I be,
Despised and poor amid earth's opulence,
It is enough to know, ere I go hence,
That Christ our Lord is brother unto me.

"Enough to know
His power of blessing in my right hand lies,
That unto him that mourns and him that dies,
I stand for God above to these below.

"Through dust and strife,
To the low hovel where the poor man moans,
Or costly mansion where his brother groans,
To dying lips I bear the Bread of Life.

"For Truth to stand,
Against the seas and hills of sin and wrong,
O, perilous position! yet how strong
When He our Leader holds me in his hand!

"And it is mine,
When the chaste dew hangs on the silent grass,
And light new-born flows through the tinted glass,
To offer up the sacrifice divine!

"How sweet to breathe
The odor of the incense as it mounts
From clinking censer to the eternal founts
Whose tide of love descends on us beneath!

"O, Holy God!
Great Father! Bleeding Lamb! and Stainless Dove!
How shall I answer to thy wondrous love?
Thyself I'll offer Thee, O, Holy God!"

And, stepping to the pulpit, he began,
In a low tone, like a cool crystal spring,
Then, like a rivulet that glides along,
Touching the flowers nodding on its brink,
Then like a river, broad and full of power,
And leaping over rocks, but never lost,
He poured his flood of feeling and of thought
Upon the mass of breathless listeners,
As the rich inundations of the Nile
Fill the expectant valleys full of joy!

A priceless treasure he had surely found,
A treasure which he understood and loved;
He knew the gaping wounds that it would close,
And with a generous hand he scattered it
In such proportion as his sick could bear.
Like a worn traveler from distant lands—
Regions of healing truth and holy joy—
He seemed to come, laden with sovereign balm
And bread-fruit, fragrant oil, and cheering wine,
Pale with the burden which he loved to bear.
True eloquence that wells up from the heart
May reach the heart; the cold and subtle brain
Can only touch the brain, and that which lives
Only upon the tongue, dies on the ear!

But, ah! what rhetoric can touch the soul
Steeped in indifference, or puffed with pride?
Yon creature now that o'er the threshold steps,
With airs well suited to the wife of Jove—
How shall her soul be entered, being full,
Until some shaft of sorrow pierce her breast?
Down the church aisle in majesty she sweeps,
As if she said, "I honor much the room
With this my gracious presence, for behold,
All you that are not lost in piety,
One who is beautiful now come to take
The thoughts you were about to give to prayer!"
Then into a posture fit for a saloon
She throws herself, and carelessly lets fall
A piece of richest drapery from her arm,

And picks it up, that it may fall again;
Then with her jeweled fingers smooths her hair,
And wishes that the next pew were a mirror.
Heaven! that a temple thou hast formed so fair
Should be the dwelling of impiety!
That those rare lips, that should adoring move,
Should curl with empty smiles or silly scorn!
That those large eyes, which wander over all,
Should miss the presence of their maker—God!

And there, beside her, huddled in a heap,
A simple girl is sitting with her beads;
Plain, homely features, doubtless, and poor clothes,
Yet there the angel of humility
Adds to her lowliness the hallowed grace
Which pride withdraws from features that are fair.
And that dull-featured man, with eyes half closed
And mind asleep, save in one dusky nook
Filled and alive with schemes of earthly gain,
What spear can pierce, what icebrook-tempered sword
Of living words can reach his callous soul!
And Hubert, too, is deaf; and though his heart
Beats, it responds not to the preacher's thought;
His keen bright eyes see only one dear form
That sits unconscious of his passioned looks.

The speaker ends, and towards the altar moves;
The seed is scattered with a liberal hand;
Some falls on stony ground and takes no root,
Some falls on shallow soil and quickly springs,

But in the sun's heat withers up and dies;
Some falls on earth that fertile is and deep,
And brings forth fruit a hundred fold, and more;
So it has been, and is, and still will be.
And now the wondrous Sacrifice takes place,
The "Clean Oblation" long ago foretold,
First offered on the Mount of Calvary.
The measure of all love is sacrifice;
True as the truest of thermometers,
This index of the heart will last forever.
"What wouldst thou do for me?" is all God asks,
And then He truly knows how much I love.
Some sacrifice their pride, and some their wealth,
And some their appetites, and some their wills,
And some their intellects, and some their lives;
Christ offered all and more than these, being God.
So, from the widow's mite of some poor girl
And him who does the most, to Jesus, Lord,
Religion stands one mighty sacrifice!

We think not much about the air we breathe,
Nor of the cooling water which we drink,
Nor of the starry host that in the vast
And hollow cave of night forever rolls,
As if to guard and soothe the slumbering world;
Nor of the sun, the bridegroom of the earth,
That lights and warms and cheers us day by day—
So common and so plentiful are they.

So the continual bounty of our God
We oft forget—forget that with the dawn,
Chasing the darkness ever, He descends
Upon our poor dim altars, and repeats
The wondrous mystery of mysteries.
Sun of the soul, hope of the weary heart,
And to the good as vital air profuse,
Cooling and quiet as the morning dews.

Munificence eternal! feeding still
From founts unknown, the mighty stream of life
That floods the universe, and, not content,
Desires to feed all people with Himself!
Ah! if the holy Sacrifice were made
Once in a lifetime, on some mountain's head,
How would the nations haste, from plain and shore,
To praise and love, to wonder and adore!

'Tis finished; and the faithful towards their homes
Move cheerfully, but Hubert lingers there
A little longer. She is kneeling yet,
And 'tis his wish to meet her as she dips
Her fingers in the holy-water vase,
That he, by seeming accident, may get,
In courtesy, as any stranger will,
A little from her fingers on his own.
And so he has. "Sweet thoughts be thine,"
He said. "Sweet thoughts be thine, and holy joy,"
Said she; and forth they passed into the light
Of April clouds and soft blue skies.

CANTO II—LOVE.

Old as our frail first mother, Eve, who held,
As forests slumber in an acorn-cup,
Unnumbered generations in her womb,
Is love—dear love, the solace of the world.
Old as the earthly paradise, which God
Steeped in the sunlight of felicity,
Which lay around that river of delight
That parted into four—the Euphrates,
The Phison, Tigris, Gehon; where the land
Is fertile! where the onyx-stone, and gold,
And bdellium are—so old is human love.
And, like the river of delight, it sprang
In Eden, and keeps flowing ever since,
Saving the blossoms of the heart from frost,
In many streams to all parts of the world.
Primeval sacrament, which Adam's sin
Could not destroy, nor the great deluge drown;
Which time can never wear, nor science touch;
From the beginning blest, and still shall be.
So old? and yet as young, and fresh, and gay
As this bright morn that, from the orient sea,
Sprang like a new creation: sweet and pure
As folded rosebuds full of dewy hope,
Or lilies fair that ere to-morrow bloom.

But far, far older is that love divine,
Begotten ere the sons of morning sang
And waked the echoes of the universe;

That glowed in silence ere the scythe of Time
Cut in two halves the vast eternity,
And made a little gap for man to breathe!
O Love Divine, that knows nor age nor change!
O, ever new! yon virgin, ere she sleep,
Will give her beating heart to thee, and flee
The stainings of the world. Yon stripling, too,
Will veil his eyes that he may not behold
The loveliest form on earth, to follow thee!
Thrice happy they who by the Lord are led!
Thrice happy they who can so tame their blood!
Theirs is the holy joy, the life of peace,
The purer foretaste of eternal things!

But to our youthful pair this is the earth,
And, as they wander by the river's side,
What visions fill the ardent Hubert's soul
Of happiness on earth. He paints a scene
Wherein nor thorn nor thistle ere shall grow,
As Fancy, to the beating of his heart, says—
"Lovely is the virgin now beside thee,
Strange the shadows from her raven lashes,
Wonderful the wells of light beneath them;
And the sun has loved her and enriched her,
For her sun-kissed cheek makes finest contrast
With the milky fountains of her bosom—
Fountains hidden all her maiden spring-tide,
Hidden, till the tiny fingers, groping,
Dinting fitfully their sphered whiteness,
Seek the budding circlets of pale crimson.

See, thy rosy children playing round thee
On the greensward, 'neath the summer sunlight.
See, they deck with flowers their dimpled sister,
Twining with her ringlets leaves and blossoms.
Now they clasp thee like the vine's fond tendrils,
And that latest gift that holds repeated
All the beauty of her beauteous mother,
Nestles in thy neck and says, 'My father!'"
Ah! they now around thee grow like cedars,
On their lips young hope and life are beaming,
Thy pride are they, thy glory and thy shelter,
The swift and polished arrows of thy quiver;
Man and woman graciously regard thee,
Thou hast tilled a field both fair and fruitful,
And in yellow autumn thou art blessed!
So runs the glowing reverie of his mind,
Then swiftly turns to where it first began,
To her dear eyes, soft lips and heaving breast.

O, lovely nature! O, sweet ties of life!
O, sun-loved earth, how glorious art thou,
Thou mighty mother! From thy willing womb
What shining treasures rise to bless mankind!
From thy unwithered bosom, corn, and oil,
And wine, and beauty flow, to feed the world!
But fairer far than earth, or sea, art thou,
Woman! Earth's goddess! where mysterious life
Unconsciously to consciousness awakes!
From thee we spring, thou beauty of all time,
And, with the gathered force of many years

Folded within our hearts, to thee return,
Bringing our earthly immortality,
Our truest word, lit by the fire of love,
Our highest offering before we die.
All that is lovely in the earth or air
Centres in thee, as mother, sister, bride.
Thou art a world, a hidden vineyard thou,
And we, made dumb by so much loveliness,
Can only sigh until with joy we find
A single member of the beauteous race,
Within our reach, with "Yes" upon her lips,
Then heart to heart is joined eternally.

And never "yes" from sweeter lips was breathed
Than from this Christian maiden pure and good.
Now twenty springs and summers she had lived
A rare, embodied thought from God's own mind,
By inward law developed; perfected
Each hour, and day, and year, so gently still
Among obstructions common to all life,
Which mar the being only where the law
Is weak within—that as a babe, a girl,
A budding virgin, now an opening rose,
All change had been but beauty sprung to light,
Which lay enfolded in the one before.

But, ah! what words are adequate to paint
That wondrous form, whose every graceful line
Defies all measurement? Those features where
The unity, that subtle bond that binds

The obedient elements in harmony,
Themselves all beautiful—cannot be given?
The pencil here is greater than the pen,
And might have once the sweet relations told
Of brow to eye, and eye to vermeil lip.
But lost, alas, forever, to this world
Is all her loveliness! To paint her well
Had been an artist's immortality,
And for the earth a thousand years of joy!

Far to the south she had her birth, and love
Preceded her existence. Peace within
The vine-clad cottage of her sire, was not
A guest, but resident; true love was there;
And where love is a new creation may
Give a new beauty to man's wondering eyes.
Where love is not, old forms are stereotyped,
A little worse or better, but not new.
The primal malediction rests on man
More fearfully in this regard than aught.
Labor is nothing; man must toil and sweat
Ere he can taste the sweets of joy and rest;
Toil executes his thought, and exercise
For mind, and heart, and limb, is blessing now.
But union without love—that fills the world
With hate and lovelessness hereditary.
Where parents live in hell, no blossom bud
Of love can in that desert spring and live;
No callow murmuring bird can learn to sing
In that foul nest of discord; living on,

They carry to the future home the strife.
Revere her parents ere thou choose thy wife!
She was a blending of the finer parts
Of both; a new, unique identity,
Moulded in love's own furnace of delight,
Washed from the stain of Eve by holy hands,
And called Christina, that she never might
Forget the ransom paid for her by Christ.
A mother's love made holier by her faith,
A father's love made deeper by his thought,
Had nurtured and defended her, until
God's dark-robed mercy took them from this earth
Both in one day, so much he prized their love.
And then she learned true sorrow all too soon,
Which o'er her face a shade of sadness threw,
Yet made her eye more beautiful and meek.
And in this sighing world of ours, in sooth,
He who has never felt true grief of heart
Has not received Beauty's most touching touch;
For man is born to trouble, and is like
The fruit that ripens with a little frost.
O sorrow! rain and dew to human hearts!
Angel of love behind a veil of tears!
What virtues follow thy moist steps, as o'er
Our gardens of affection thou dost pass,
Crushing our roses, lilies, violets,
So seeming ruthlessly! O, I would not
Efface one print which thy dear foot has made,
Even if thy coarser brother, Joy, would fill
With his own wine the space, till it run o'er!

The wine of joy now fills the lovers' hearts;
Silence for them seems better far than words,
And, from the modest pressure of the hand,
Enough of love's electric currents flow.
Wrapt in a pleasing mystery, they move
As if there were none others in the world—
But Adam and his helpmate o'er again,
And earth as fair as paradise before
The serpent, in deceitful graces clad,
Poured hellish poison into Eve's proud ear.
The lovers' hearts are one. The vows are made,
And sealed by ruby signets, passion pressed;
All things that will not fade are witnesses—
Faith, Truth and Love, and the bright hosts of heaven!
All that is beautiful, serene or grand,
Forms fitting background for immortal love;
The living stream, blue air, and hanging rock
Where cedars clutch with persevering roots,
And lift their heads into the smiles of heaven—
As holy wedlock's self, whose roots in time
Are fixed, but whose immortal fruit may lie
Before the throne of God—all these and more
Are witnesses two hearts are now made one,
Which still will live apart until that voice
That blessed the first of mortals bless them too.

CANTO III—THE AIR.

"I look to find some form I may compare
With his whose image in my bosom lies,

But fancy fails me, and the earth around
Gives naught like him to glad my weary eyes.

"Long, long it seems since I have heard his voice,
And yet his voice is with me night and day;
His eyes look into mine when earth is dark,
And then I wake, and find he is away.

"His brow is like a palace pale with light,
The rose of life is blooming on his cheek,
His eyes are like two sapphires of the sky,
Darkened by shadows, searching, large and meek.

"And I am tawny. Yet he used to praise
My dim, wan cheek, and my soft, dimpled chin;
The clustering darkness of my hair, mine eyes,
My lips and the twin rows of pearls within.

"I fear 'twas but compassion made him love,
That he might shield so frail a thing as I,
For beauty I have none. Alas! alas!
Were it not sinful I would wish to die!

"Perhaps some other maiden he has seen;
And I have heard that man is fickle-hearted—
Be still, my beating breast, for lo, he comes!
And now it seems that we have ne'er been parted!"

"Where hast thou been these many, many days?
And why art thou so pale and hollow-eyed?

Ah, thou hast suffered something terrible,
And I, alas! not near to comfort thee!"

With that the tears ran down her lovely cheeks,
And Hubert kissed them every one away,
And drew her down beside him on the moss
That wrapped the roots of a gigantic pine.
The sea lay all before them, murmuring
Like giant in his dreams; and, o'er the sea,
The sky, without one speck of cloud to stain
The everlasting azure; earth, behind,
Lay all unseen; and, save the cushioned spot
Whereon they rested, and the sandy shore
That stretched a little space before their feet,
And some dark pendant boughs, above their heads,
Of never-fading green—the world for them
Seemed all shut out. Then sadly spoke the maid—

"Indeed, my heart was like a widow's grown,
Until I saw thee in this solitude
Which thou hast ever chosen for our walks.
And even now, a strange presentiment
Comes o'er my heart, that it is widowed yet.
Something has happened which I fear, yet wish
To know, and thou art longer silent now
Than was thy wont. Thy clustered chestnut locks
Are straggled on thy brow, and 'neath thine eyes
The pearly hue is darker than before;
A beard upon the corners of thy chin
Has grown, which makes thee less and less like me;

The playful line dividing thy full lips
Grows straighter, and the pressure of thy hand,
Whose veins are fuller, and of darker blue,
Feels some restraint, as of a bridle thrown
Upon thy soul!"

"O, dearest one on earth!
Have patience; all is well. What I have seen,
And where, I'll tell to thee, and only thee.
Yet I shall fail, because my lips are mortal,
To make thee see as I myself have seen;
For human words are trammeled in their birth,
Discordant and confused; they swallow time
In slow unfolding of a mighty thought
By lesser thoughts, as if a man should see
One day a seed, another day a leaf,
Another many leaves, and then again
A well-grown vine, and on the next the bloom,
And after that the fruit mature; and I
Had seen the whole e'en at a single glance—
Seed, leaf, vine, flower, and clusters fair and ripe.
Or, as an eagle, high above the earth,
Sees rivers rise, sweep over many lands,
And lose themselves in ocean; and we here
See but the bend of some small tributary.

"When we had sealed our fondly-plighted faith
With many silent kisses and heart-throbs,
And parted, I walked quickly to the wood
That stretches some few miles along the vale.

The many windings of the rivulet,
And all the paths within, I know full well,
Yet on I walked, not thinking where I went,
Until the night came on before I knew.
I was astray! and from my height of joy,
Which from the pressure of thy bosom sprang,
I fell into the gloomiest views of life,
And every shape in nature that I saw
Seemed like a phantom pressing on my soul.
The shapeless moon was sinking helplessly,
Like my poor dying mother, wasted, pale,
The round of womanhood all worn away;
Then like shot sea-bird dangling through the air,
Then like a vessel bleached by wind and wave,
Drifting all tenantless into the dark
Long ridge of clouds, that looked like moving graves.
A weight of grief without its memory,
A dim remembrance of celestial thoughts,
Which for a moment in their beauty came,
But unrecorded died, oppressed my soul.
I felt some unknown loss. I sat me down
Beside the little stream upon a stone,
And listened to the low wind as it sighed
Among the shivering leaves, and watched the stars
Swing in the water at my feet, till all
Was covered o'er by large, dark, trailing clouds,
Like muffled ghosts. A hand here touched my head,
And a voice said, 'Fear not! but come with me!'
I strained mine eyes, I grasped the figure's arm,
But the wind blew its mantle 'round my frame,

And all my light was gone, and down we sank.
Down, down we went, but where I know not yet;
The air felt cold and damp, as in a cave
Where sunlight never falls; and once I felt,
Against my side, the hard wall of a precipice—
My breath was spent, I swooned, and knew no more.

"How long we fell, or through what space we fell,
I could not guess, but slowly woke with pain
Across mine eyeballs, and a sense of light
Through my stiff lids; the air seemed fresh and pure.
I looked, and lo! the universe was gone!
We seemed to form the centre of vast space,
Which, like an ocean limitless and still,
Circled around, and under, and above.
No promontory sunny-browed was there,
Or headland green, or lone cloud islanded
Upon that strange and dim uncertain sea.
But all so motionless and colorless,
That fear did almost drink my life away,
As, overpowered by nothingness and silence,
We hung, like solitary grains of dust,
Within this awful and unknown abyss.
Had I not had the feeling in my throat
As if my life and spirit wished to mount
In opposition to my body's weight,
Which dragged me still adown like sinking lead,
I would have thought that we were motionless.

"To see the face of my mysterious guide
I longed, and often upward cast a glance;
But whether he intended to conceal,
Or that in sinking the large mantle skirt
Blew back upon his visage, hiding it
By accident, I know not; yet an awe
And love for him possessed my soul at first,
As of a son towards a father dear.
Taller and stronger was he than myself,
And suddenly, as if my wish he knew,
He moved the folds from off his face, and looked
Half down on me, and lo! I knew him well!
A poet's crown, a simple wreath of leaves,
Lance-pointed, and as green as emerald,
Sat firmly on his head, and 'twixt the leaves
The gold and crimson amaranths of heaven!
As from the nimbus of a sainted head,
Light from this diadem illumed his face,
And his dark waving hair all floating up
As down and down we sank. The mighty bard
Who, led by Virgil, visited the realms
Of spiritual death and pining hope,
And by a fairer, dearer hand was brought
To view the wonders of God's paradise,
Was there beside me. Giotto's pencil had
So fixed the Florentine within my mind
That instantly his strong identity
Flashed on me; yet his face was somewhat changed;
The bitterness upon his nether lip
That used to be, was turned to sweetness now.

"I would have spoken, but beneath our flight
Behold! the margeless ocean darker grows,
And one by one the stars start from the deep,
As in the twilight of our own dear earth.
Now they increase in bulk, and brighter grow
With every heart-beat; disks of pure white fire
Wheel past us right and left, and overhead!
O, who shall tell the grandeur of the scene?
The strange and lone sublimity which reigns
Where space illimitable stretches round,
And silence broods with never-lifted wing?
Where suns and planets, and attendant moons,
Crescents and girdles of the softest light,
Move in eternal order on their way!
And yet the grandeur lies in thought, not sight;
For planets, suns and rings of radiant fire
Seem but like spangles floating in the deep,
No bigger than our moon; my guide and I
The greatest objects in creation seemed,
For, 'twixt the circles of attracting power,
Where we belonged to neither orb, we moved;
Distance immense reducing spheres so vast
To points of brightness in the hollow gloom.

"How often do we vainly wish for power
To sail on mountain-clouds as through the blue
They sweep with fleecy summits bathed in light,
And view the hills and valleys spread below,
The shining rivers flowing o'er the earth,
And cities with their domes and towers and spires!

This would be grander far to human eyes
Than hanging in the centre, filled with awe,
Breathing the thin, strange air, and knowing naught
About the termination of our course.

"As on the ocean wrecked two men may be,
The one a swimmer, while the other clings
In terror to his vesture, so was I
Ready to perish and disperse in air
But for his powerful aid. A new field, soon,
Of pale and genial mist, well pleased, we met,
Which seemed to draw me sideways from my guide,
Who told me we were in a comet's wake,
And, as a boatman in a rapid stream
Aims higher up on the opposing bank,
We also at an angle had to cross
In that I, being still mortal, felt the force
Which he, a spirit, is not hindered by.

"The darkness closed around like a dense mist,
And far beneath a something grew and spread
Like lurid drops wide-scattered over space.
Nearer and nearer still, until it seems
A mighty monster with a thousand mouths,
In whose red throats unnumbered tongues of fire
Move ceaselessly. My guide here stayed our flight,
And halting swung above. "The sulph'rous air
Grows hot," he said; "seven miles below this point
Thou couldst not see, nor breathe, as now thou art;
These are the chimneys and the doors of hell.

Since visited by me there has been change,
But change brings no alleviation there.
We entered by another way, whereon
The hopeless legend was, the which I read,
'All hope abandon, ye who enter here!'
And gave to those who tread your lightsome earth.
Hearken to that strange sound that reaches us,
Like the far murmurs of some stormy sea!
None can distinguish what is gathered there—
Low mutterings of despair, and shrieks of pain,
And wailings that would melt thy human heart;
Foul execrations horrible to hear,
And all unutterable blasphemies.
Therefore, that foolish pity may not mar
The memory of things which thou shalt see,
And that the fire may have on thee no power,
I pour upon thy head this precious juice,
The bleedings from a tree of paradise,
Which as a shield will wrap thy tender frame,
And let thee pass unhurt through this great woe."
So, having ta'en a vial from his breast,
He did as he had said, and I could feel
Delicious coolness o'er my body flow,
And in my soul was strength, and in my heart
The feeling that the Lord of Power is just.
I crossed my hands upon my breast, and bowed
My head low down, adoring; and he, too,
Adoring, bowed a moment his wreathed head,
Crossing himself with both his beauteous hands,
Then we descended through the volumed smoke

That o'er the mouths of craters numberless
Hung like a restless black and pierless arch;
It seemed there was no room for earth or heaven,
A space so large is occupied by Hell.

But, see! the light is fading, and the star,
The star of love, beneath whose gentle ray
We parted last, is beaming; evil things
Come forth in darkness, let us haste away!
What I must tell thee, I must tell by day.

CANTO IV.—A GLIMPSE OF HELL.

Again we meet upon the sandy shore,
Again the lonely music of the sea
Hums in our ears; and, floating in the blue,
Sometimes like heavenly palaces of light,
Sometimes to hills and vales, the airy clouds
Change to new forms of loveliness and peace.
  When I behold thy beauty and this scene,
Then look into my memory, I say:
"Thanks be to heaven, I am on earth once more!"
  Hell is a terrible reality
To him who for an instant has beheld
One object there; but far more terrible
To him who through its horrid womb has moved,
And seen the misery of miseries.
  A thousandth part of it I will not tell;
And half of what I tell, thy gentle soul,
So pure and guileless, cannot comprehend;

Thy innocence is like a milk-white dove,
That lives on earth, but has no stain of earth;
Be happy that thou canst not understand
Some things I will relate; thy ignorance
More precious is than knowledge. Thankful be
That thy pure nature shrinks instinctively
At the recital, as the timid fawn,
Startled, shrinks back at moving of the grass
Before the deadly rattle stirs the air,
As if she felt the serpent's atmosphere!

No! I'll not tell thee. Live thy beauteous life!
Why shouldst thou know the crimes of this sad world?
For hell begins on earth; and if the Church,
With all her holy mysteries and life,
The bread and wine of immortality,
The pious supplications from the hearts
Of virtuous men and women, and the dear
And ever lovely lispings of the young,
With all the good deeds that are done unknown,
And noticed only by the eye of heaven —
If all these were not, earth would then be hell.
  In vain the mountains lift their heads in air,
In vain upon their sides the cedars grow,
In vain the fertile valley spreads its charms,
Or the majestic river through its bosom
Carries the sunlit clouds and blue serene,
The treasures of earth's lap are poured in vain,
The grandeur of creation is as naught,
In sight of him who loves nor man nor God.

Yet I must tell some little part at least,
So that I fail not in obedience due.
"But why," I asked of him who led me there,
"Why bring'st thou me to this sad place of pain?
More than five hundred years ago thy pen
Gave to the upper earth a work sublime,
Thy 'Vision,' which reveals this under world,
The middle region, and the bliss of heaven.
What can I tell, of all that I may see,
To match one canto, or one page of thine?
Thou standest high among the laureled heads,
Thy fame continues to increase and shine,
What could I say to which mankind would listen?
I, poor, unknown, and lack the poet's power!"
There, now, said he, thy vanity appears;
'Tis not alone to tell what thou hast seen,
But for thy soul's salvation thou art brought
To see in truth that bodies shall endure
The fiercest pain, yet crumble not to ashes,
But, like the liver of Promethus, grow
To feed the vulture fire, which never dies.
Thy weakling faith has often staggered been
At this same hell, and many more with thee,
That God, all good, should finite, sinful man
Condemn to punishment which has no end;
But know thou this, that were the damned in heaven,
'Twould be no heaven to them; within their breasts
They carry that which makes their hell, for they
Died in rebellion with the Good Supreme,
And dying thus, they rebels still remain,

Sinning forever, punished, too, for aye.
If for the cup of water which you give
For Jesus' sake, an infinite reward
Is granted, then a punishment as vast
Must follow mortal sin, when unforgiven.

First, for thy own eternal good, behold
This wretchedness, believe that God is just,
And thank him for his mercy unto thee;
Next, if thy memory serve thee, tell to her
Thy other soul, what thou shalt see and hear.
Trust to thy power, that rare intensity
By which thy mind can picture that which once
Has been conceived within it through thine eyes.
Whate'er thou writest will be easier read
Than mine, and also easier understood;
For I am only by the learned few
Perused and fathomed—though the many boast.
My admiration, too, of classic lore
And reverence for my gifted countryman,
Whose Ænead, filled with goddesses and gods,
Corrupt mythology of Greece and Rome,
That sways the minds of many in your day,
And hath debased both literature and art,
And dimmed religious light, and cooled its fire—
That subtle poison and its witchery
Inclined me to describe as beings seen
In this grim vault, old Charon and his boat,
And gloomy Pluto, and the Centaur troop,
The which I now could wish had not been writ;

For all this I, perhaps, have suffered pain,
But now 'tis vanished from my memory.
The Christian poet has a realm so broad,
So high, so rich, so true and beautiful,
Nature and *Faith,* with all their wondrous fruits,
He needs no pagan fancies to adorn
His pious numbers; for, although these names
May represent some principle in nature,
As Saturn, Time devouring his own children,
Or some great hero of the human race,
As Hercules, the strong and virtuous,
Or if, as some suppose, they are the gang
Who followed in revolt man's enemy,
And then became the deities of man,
How well they have succeeded in their game,
Earth's history, from the time in which I sighed
To that in which thou breathest, can declare.
Surely, 'tis more than time that things were called
By names that truly suit their qualities;
For beauty, which is still the poet's aim,
Must rest on truth, or beauty it is not.
And others, too, have labored to depict
This gloomy sepulchre of fallen men,
As if it were a region all sublime,
And round its chief a certain grandeur reigned,
A vulgar notion that belongs in time
Where characters corrupt, in clothing rich,
And odors rare float by like things divine,
When they are only lumps of gilded sin,
The garnished tombs, that hold but dead men's bones.

Virtue exalts, but hate debases ever,
And here is known just for the thing it is.
The costly glare which vice assumes on earth,
That it may pass for virtue, is not here;
No fingers, decked with pearls, and gems, and gold,
No jeweled ears, or cheeks with painted bloom,
Or ringlets, fragrant with the soul of flowers,
Nor satins, velvets, silks, or waving plumes;
All these the shallow slaves of sin may wear,
Without the virtues they might indicate,
But in this naked region are not seen.

That which is basest and most vile on earth,
Is here turned into instruments of woe:
Squalor, corruption, horrid snakes and apes,
And creeping things, all shapes most loathed and feared.
The very fiends, tormenting and tormented,
Lewd, hateful, weak, misshapen and half blind,
Bear not a trace of the angelic form.
Proud Lucifer himself, no regal throne,
Decked with barbaric pearl and massive gold,
Has ever yet possessed; though poets feign
He reigns in splendor like an eastern king.
No radiance lingers round his hollow eyes,
Nor sign of royalty, nor princely power;
No councilors of state around him throng,
In eloquence majestic, and no knee
Of supple courtier bends to do him grace;
Homage or reverence he has ne'er received;
No gleaming sceptre fills his withered hand;

His vast dominion is a desert wide,
Where hideous things can never hide themselves.
And where he suffers torments from the damned,
More grievous than his dupes sustain from him.
The radiant beauty vanished from his brow,
And faded all his archangelic light,
When from the starry battlements he reeled,
And staggered gasping down, transformed by sin
Into the ugliest monster ever left
On this side of annihilation's brink,
To be abhorred by all, or saved or lost.
The doleful suffering, too, which thou shalt see,
Is not the same as was by me described;
New crimes prevail on earth, new punishment
Is gendered by the crime, whate'er it be;
For crimes on earth unpardoned form the seed
Of all the anguish and the terror here.
This is the night of the great universe,
Whose drear and infinite circumference
Surrounds, as with a girdle, all that is
Of substance, color, form, or life, or light.
Dark, and still darker to the outer darkness,
It stretches where no soul hath ever been,
And holds extremes ferocious, frost and fire
Bereft of all their beauty seen elsewhere,
With all degrees and elements of woe.
The residue of chaos lies beyond
All gray and lampless, without form and void.
The light of God, whose smile enkindles all
The suns of all the systems into fire,

Which send their genial beams to all their worlds,
And by reflection on attendant orbs,
That man and bird and beast and plant may live,
Is here all broken, hindered and shut out
By beings ever rebel to his law,
And even the elements resemble them.
Nothing is good where man is bad; this light,
Lurid and ghastly, if it did but shine
Upon an aged hermit bent in prayer,
How it would beautify his silver beard
And caverned solitude! This fire,
Which cheers the dwellers of your earth in winter,
As round the hearth the ruddy faces shine
Of happy children, and, by skill of man,
Is made a servant full of power and beauty,
Becomes the scorpion-lash of fiercest pain
In this dim dungeon; and this gray, weird gleam
But shows what they would hide, and strangely weaves
Spectres of terror to affright and wound."
He paused, and downward slowly then we moved
Through smoke and wailing cries into a place
Dismal and horrid as a slaughter-house.
His words seemed frightful—the reality
Turned speech to nothing but a wasted breath.
There, haggard women sat in pools of blood,
And in each lap a blind abortion lay
Whose eyes were destined never to see light.
With restless care one wretched creature tried
To chafe to life a clay-cold unripe thing;
She turned it o'er and o'er, she breathed hot breath

On its discolored form, as peasants blow
Their blue, swollen fingers on a wintry day,
Then dropped her head and wailed. Another rocked
Her body to and fro, and tried to sing
A lullaby to something in her arms;
Her voice was cracked, her song was but a shriek.
Another, hollow-eyed and ghastly staring,
With some strange lingerings of beauty left,
Held her lean, milkless nipple to a mouth
That will not open, and at intervals
Her once too lovely face grew black with pain.
And there they sit, and must forever sit,
And each must ply her vain task ceaselessly.
They hush, they warm, they hide them in their bosoms,
They wish their withered dugs would spring with milk;
A mother's love has come, alas! too late;
Phantoms of smiling infants crowned with flowers
Hover before their eyes, and on their knees
They look again and find forever—death.
And round about them, in a fiercer doom
Than tongue of man yet mortal may describe,
Howl those who were seducers and conspired,
Against the laws of nature and her God,
To murder life in its pre-natal bed.
Then further on we moved; yet, ere we left,
A shower, as if of withered autumn leaves,
Of staring, spectral men and women fell
From this gay world of ours: from Britian's isle,
Where in one year twelve thousand infants die
By suffocation, drowning, drugs or steel,—

A heavy annual tribute to this realm.
And thousands, too, from that great western land
Last born among the nations; woe, alas!
When these most damnable of practices
Brings not the blush of shame upon her cheek!
Her beauteous daughters now do waste away,
The mother-heart is gone; lank, pale and weak,
Yet vain and proud, they die before they live.
"These are abortionists," my laureled guide
Said, with a lofty scorn, and turned his head
Away with most unutterable contempt,
And I, all silent, could not speak a word;
Silent for shame that I had lived on earth
And been near men who scattered o'er the land
Schemes and incentives to commit this crime,
And on the untimely harvest fed and smiled!
Oh, could they see but one of these, I thought,
Then kiss a babe's soft cheek and hear her voice,
Sweeter than any song-bird ever sang,
Say "father," they would die a thousand deaths
Rather than do or help such work of hell!

Not far we move, for 'tis a city full,
Where wide disorder reigns. The wavering crowds
Welter and sway with grim unrest to find
Some spot more tolerable for their pain,
As each wretch dreams that where another is
Is easier than his place. Yet, as we moved,
On either side they shrank abashed, and knew

The light from soul redeemed, and gnashed their teeth,
But had no power to hurt, or flee away.

These are a swarm of drunkards on the left,
Who in delirium tremens, all unshriven
And unanointed, rushed before the Judge,
Leaving their children naked to the world,
And their own bestial bodies in the sinks
Of filth and vice to lie in graves unblest.
They would avoid us; yet this one must speak:
"Why should I tell thee all my sufferings?
If thou canst pity me, thou hast no power;
If thou hast power, ah! then thou hast no pity.
Thy lips are moist, thine eyes unseared by fire,
But here I wail, parched by eternal thirst,
And all the bubbling springs I ever saw
Wasting their coolness on insensate stones
And worthless moss, are still before mine eyes.
The blessed showers of rain in which I've been,
And evils thought, now seem worth all your world;
The dew-drops hanging on the idle grass,
Yea, even the muddy pools in rutted roads
In which with red feet I have paddled oft
And jumped for joy, a careless, happy child,
Are priceless and unpurchasable here.
O, worse than fabled Tantalus am I,
He was a fancy—this, reality."

Yon straggling crowds who hang their heads and sign
Were skeptics and materialists on earth;

They were their own gods there, and dared to judge
The mighty Maker of the universe
As if they were His peers; here each one now
Is his own devil, and torments himself
Bewailing things past hope. With loud pretence
They boasted they were "seekers after truth,"
But not with singleness of heart they sought,
Or surely they had found. Though they were proud,
Yet with a base humility they strove
To drag man to the level of the beast.
The soul, free will, responsibility,
Life beyond death in the eternal world,
God and his holy law, were all denied.
Eat, drink, be merry! shut our ears to death,
(Like the fool ostrich, with his head in sand),
Pleasant sensations let us multiply!
And as they multiplied their shallow joys
Death touched them on the throat, and down they dropped.
Listen to this one, speaking to himself:
"O, fearful power! O, most appalling gift!
By man unsought, yet cannot be refused,
Ability to choose the deeps of hell,
Ability to choose the heights of heaven,
Without the choice to cease and be no more!
Thou wretched memory of misused time,
Whose springless winter ends in endless night,
What opiate now shall still thee? O, my heart,
Still beating, and still fed that thou may'st beat,
Break, and befriend thy owner! And thou, soul,

That, like a dew-drop from the fields of God,
Surpassing the lost earth in perfectness,
And in duration the bright Pleiades,
Whose virgin clearness I have stained and marred,
And sold for this inheritance of woe—
Is there no hope for thee?" The echoes said,
From thousand fiendish tongues, "No hope for thee!"

"Hast ever seen a king with sparkling crown
And golden sceptre? If thou hast, look there!
Many of these were emperors, kings or queens,
Princes or presidents, or men in power;
And now, what are they? side by side they groan
With common cutthroats, and the vile obscure.
Society is leveled downwards here,
As you may see by noticing that one
Whose jaws are broad, who moves his head aside."
There lay a mass of foul deformity,
Lewd and disgusting as a swollen reptile,
The bloody deformation's first-born son,
That scathed and wasted England's glorious realm;
And round him wallowed in the fiery pool
Some horrid shapes half woman and half fiend.
That body on which fine apparel hung,
And gold and jewels, now unclean and bare
Lay groveling like a beast; and round that head
Where sainted Edward's diadem once beamed,
A coil of toads by devilish paws were strung,
As if in mockery of his former state.
Like some corrupted, blear-eyed, dozing wretch

That in the gutters of a city lies,
One would have thought that he was dead, until
A restless vulture in his eye was seen
That told of inward lust that raged like fire,
Unquenched forever, like the outward flames.
One with a red line round her neck shrieked out—
"I am thy child, thy wife, thy victim, too,
Thou are my father, husband, murderer!"
Another, with a thin, sarcastic voice,
Cried, "I am here instead of Catharine,
Whose sainted spirit in immortal bliss
Remembers thee no more!" Then, as we turned,
A darkness gathered o'er them like a pall,
And they increased their fearful screams and howls
As if some terrible expected woe
Was then to be inflicted, which my guide
Did not seem willing I should then behold,
But moved a little way and said to me:
"The gloomiest region yet we must explore,
Corruption of the best is always worst.
The mighty oak that throws his branches high,
The misty mountains that lift up their heads
In heaven's own blue, cast shadows deeper far
Than mound or mole-hill, or the stunted shrub.
The man with God-like intellect, when blind
To God's pure law, a skeptic or insane,
'Tis more deplorable to know, than those
Who never knew what 'twas to have a thought.
The highest fall the lowest; Lucifer,
The morning star, that by the eternal throne

Resplendent shone, fell to the deeps of hell.
The wilderness that lies before us now,
Where neither flower, nor bush, nor tree, nor rock
Shall ever rear its head to cool the eye
With tints of green and gold; where murky gray
The ceiling hangs above the dull gray floor,
As if they were reflections of each other—
That is the hell of priests. Mark how they hold
Their hands behind their backs! their tongues are struck,
A kind of twitching palsy spoils their speech,
They never can pronounce the Savior's name,
But yet the deepest blasphemy they mutter.
Their knowledge of divine theology
Helps them to scoff at holiest mysteries
While they believe and shudder in their hearts.
On the soft point of each fore-finger hangs
A small, but horrid snake of leprous white,
With eyes of fire, and nose sunk to the bone,
And in the opposing thumbs their tails are hid.
From these points only have they pain—but pain
Of a new kind, unknown, mysterious,
Not to be understood by mortal man.
Alas! these fingers held the blessed Host
While thousands knelt adoring; gave the Bread,
The body of our Lord, the life of souls,
To millions now in blessedness supreme,
While they in wretchedness supreme are here.
These are the yield of eighteen centuries
Into the devil's barn—a ghostly crew.
No power of absolution now have they,

And if they had they would not absolve each other,
So far are they removed from charity.
Schismatics, heresiarchs, and prowling wolves,
Who crept into the fold of Christ for gain—
Not love—or left it for a baser love,
Like this grim shadow that I force to speak.
  Pale and cadaverous, with bluish lips,
Gray hair, hard-furrowed brow and restless eye,
A lean and miserable one we saw
Walk to and fro, like tiger in a cage.
Silent and sour, he would have let us pass,
But was compelled, I know not how, to tell
His secret life, which tortured him the more.
"At Noyon was I born, in sunny France,
A Frenchman, but without a Frenchman's heart;
Revengeful, restless, gloomy, vigilant;
With talent of high order, well brought out.
As good men saw me when upon the earth,
So now I see myself, but all too late.
My death—no, not my death, would I were dead!
For I am dying still, yet cannot die,
But my dark passage from your smiling world,
Was at Geneva, where they huddled me
Into the ground, almost ere I was stiff,
But Haren, curse him yet, has laid all bare;
The black veil o'er my face, the guarded room,
And huried funeral were of no avail.
Would that the odor of my sanctity,
Which filled that chamber then, had choked his breath,
Or my despairing groans had struck him dumb!

Yet what care I? some others, too, are here,
And suffer more than I do, with these worms,
That only to anointed fingers cling.
The genial heat of love, the spring of life,
That poets sing of, that I never knew;
Rather the cold lust of the crocodile
That burns like frost, and petrifies the soul.
Would that I now were stone! for in my ears
Forever rings the *'Misericordia!'*
Of grim Servetus, whom I burned to death.
And yonder, see! a phantom, famine-clung,
Is fishing drift-wood from the river Rhine,
To warm his starving children and their dam;
That is Castalio, whom I hunted down,
Or else his apparition!" And his eyes
Glared, as in horrid vision he beheld
The men whom he had wronged for claiming that
Which he himself had claimed: the right, mis-named,
Of private judgment upon things divine.
"Now cast thine eyes upon this other's woe!
For of all tortured in this house of doom,
Nothing more dreadful shall thine eyes behold."
Illustrous guide! I cried, enough! enough!
O, lift me to the green and sunny earth.
My faith is fixed; O, let us haste away.
Through the dark catalogue of mortal sin's
Unending punishment, O, lead me not!
But for the heavenly balm that wraps my frame,
But for the steadfast thought that God is just,
Which here I see confirmed so terribly,

But for the secret hope that mercy may,
Not justice, deal with me, I here should sink,
With pity and with terror, into nought.
O, turn our eyes from crime's eternal meed,
And let my heart with human feeling beat,
For man who in God's image lives on earth!
Restore me to the maid I love, whose smile
Will make an earthly paradise for me,
Of that dear cottage where my mother dwelt.
There the sweet streamlet rushes o'er the stones,
And roses bend above the still, deep pools,
To see their beauty; and the speckled trout
Poise their bright forms, as birds do in the air.
The living springs gush through moss-covered rocks,
The rocky cliff, ne'er scaled by mortal foot,
Grey with the clinging lichen, rears on high
Its frowning forehead, crowned by dark green pines,
Whose lengthening shadows in the evening beam,
Veil the rude chapel in a twilight hue.
There the rich clusters of the favored vine,
Purple, or pale, or dark with smoky bloom,
Upon the rustic trellis ripening hang.
In that secluded spot, O, let me spend
The life that God may give, in thanks and praise;
And supplication that this living death,
Dragged through eternity, so far from God's
Most holy light and love, may ne'er be ours!
"Whilst thou art speaking fondly of thy home,
In part thy wish is granted; for, behold,
The last dim glimmer of the infernal gulf

Is passing from our sight; the last faint sound
Of hopeless agony dies on our ears.
Close now thy wearied eyes, and cling to me,
The while in blest transition through vast space,
I bring thee to a realm"—but here I lost,
With sight and sense, all consciousness of being.
And let me, also, dearest, leave this theme,
So dark and frightful; from the little told,
Some notion of the shuddering horror wide
May be imagined. We are on the earth,
And feel the evening zephyr on our cheeks;
Thy hand is soft and warm—the pulsing life
Throbs gently through thy fingers into mine.
The sun is sinking, and the new-born moon,
Like a fine thread of silver, curved and faint,
Is scarcely noticed in the farewell beam;
The landscape fades, too, like a pleasant dream!

CANTO V.—A GLIMPSE OF HEAVEN.

Who can describe the sun, when from the deep
He springs, his moist locks dropping pearls and gold?
Who can describe the sun when he descends
Into his peaceful crimson-folded tent,
With such an unmoved majesty and power?
Who can describe his glory, when, upon
The key of the bright arch of heaven he shines?
For mortal tongue or pencil—ah! too bright.
What stricken mother, o'er her infant leaning,
Whose mute soul flew an hour before, would make

A poem of her grief? What favored one,
With his chaste, sole-beloved within his arms,
Could weigh his consciousness of happiness,
And count the throbbings of the pulse of joy?

The highest admiration finds no tongue,
And silent is the deepest, keenest grief,
And voiceless is the being all absorbed
In hallowed love: and yet in after time,
The recollection, limping, tries to bring
Back to the heart, that wishes to re-feel
Its highest throbbings o'er and o'er again,
Even though in fragments, weak, disjointed, dim,
The memory of that which once was known.
And as when children visit the sea-shore,
They load themselves with stones and pearly shells,
But home returning, weary of the weight,
They cast reluctantly a part away;
And as they wearier grow, their treasures leave
Upon the roadside, and e'en what they keep
Have lost the dewy freshness of the wave—
So glimpses of the other world supreme,
And memories of the holy house of God,
When brought to earth, grow dim and fade away.

As when the artist on the landscape gazes,
Where rocks and cataracts, and streams and trees,
And verdant vales, and mountains that aspire,
With peaks of misty amethyst, to touch
The soft blue fire of air, all glowing bright

Beneath the summer sun's resplendent beams—
Then on his earthy pigments, so opaque,
So dull, so few the steps 'twixt light and dark,
He lays his color-palette down and sighs.
So I on human language used on earth,
To tell the splendors of the eternal world.
We entered heaven—or rather be it said,
Heaven flowed round us and through us where we were,
Where'er that was, or deep, or far, or near,
Or high, I know not; space for us was changed,
And changed the whole relationship of things.
As a pale weed, that in some dark vault pines,
When brought to sunlight, droops its head and falls,
I fell upon my face; forgot the world,
Forgot even thee, beloved! and seemed to pass
From death to life, the life of gratitude,
Of wonder, adoration, love, and peace.

O, 'tis not that cold death is there unknown!
It is not that from storms the skies are free;
It is not that oppression's iron hand
Ne'er bows the wretched poor man to the dust;
Nor is it that disorder never comes,
Nor strife, nor darkness, nor division chill
Between once loving hearts; all these at times,
On earth we know not; nor that there the flowers
Forever blossom; nor that melody,
In harmony supreme flows through all space;
Nor that sweet peace with noiseless pinion broods
O'er verdant vales, pellucid streams, and seas,

Begemmed with islands where the happy walk;
Nor that the parent of all beauty—light,
Bathes all things in his mystic three-fold beam;
For snatches of all these we have on earth—
But, like a chalice filled with golden wine,
Each being, human or angelic, there
Is, from the fountain of unfading bliss,
Full to the brim!

On earth we see or hear,
And straight feel sad or joyful, we depend
So much upon the outward, false or frail;
Within the heavenly habitations, each
Carries celestial fire within his breast,
And heaven is to him where'er he be.
Here also still from these our bodies dark
The darkening shadow falls; not so in heaven,
All shadowless they move or stand or bend,
No dull obstruction or opacity
Distorts or hinders the divine effulgence;
For, as a multitude of sweetest children
Gathered between us and the central glory,
The brightness streamed through the adoring throng,
As if the space were but transparent air.

Like a long undulating field they moved,
Fairer than budding lilies of the vale,
In such a graceful order, that mine eyes
I could not lift from them—and well for me,
For lo! a mother, newly entering heaven,

In rapture clasped the foremost in her arms,
And knelt in speechless joy; for she had been
A heathen when her baby died, and thought,
When Christian faith had lately filled her soul,
That she should never more behold the one,
The only one that from her bosom fed,—
Being unbaptized—and now, her every look
Was thanks to God, and blessings on the hand
That poured in secret on its dying head,
The limpid water through which Christ is seen.
Yet all of these fair innocents were hers,
Much more than ever child on earth can be
To the most loving parent; ah! thought I,
Whoever for *His* sake has childless been
On the bleak earth, will not by that have lost.

My looks were lifted upward by my thought;
But, oh! no mortal nor immortal eye
Can gaze upon that radiance which enshrines
Him who made all things by Almighty Power,
Almighty Wisdom, and Almighty Love!
No function or created instrument
Can look on its Creator and exist.
Only the One begotten of the One,
Only the One proceeding from the Two,
Only the Sole Begetter, Three in One,
Who is before, is now, and ever is!
The angels veil their faces with their wings,
Archangels, seraphim, nor souls redeemed,
Nor sinless Spouse of God herself can pierce

The living splendors that, eternally,
Flow from the Triune—blest forevermore!
The boundless Centre, Who includes for aye,
All space, all centre, all circumference!

Yet, as the birds, in sunshine of our earth
Catch on their wings the light that makes our day,
So through the gleaming pinions of the blest,
And through their shining garments streams that light
Which he who feels it knows must come from God.
And even to me it was permitted there,
Within concentric zones of radiance pure,
To feel and be one with eternal truth—
Will, thought and feeling, all in harmony,
At home, at home, within our Father's House!
Resting we seemed forever, and yet moved
In scarlet crimson flame, where light of light
In undulating streams of music flowed,
And angel, cherub, seraph, were on fire,
And all my being burned with one sole love,
The love of the Almighty Father, God.

Wrapped, too, in golden fire, through which the light
In sweet and never-ending beauty flowed,
We saw an altar of pale purple dye,
The color of the lips of our dead Lord,
As if the living flowers of fairest form
Had grown and twined themselves in wondering love,
Then changed to crystals of the Amethyst.
A priest with snowy beard beside it stood,

With angels opal-winged for acolytes,
And swung a smoking censer in his hand,
From which large drops like burning amber fell,
Dissolved, and filled the air with a new joy.
I could not speak, being lost in such delight;
I had no wish to know if sacrifice
Is offered still in heaven as on earth,
Wonder and joy excluding all desire.
And strangest harmonies upon my soul,
As of unnumbered voices all in one,
More ravishing than all the instruments
That ever man has framed, from shepherd's reed
And stringed tortoise-shell, to organ vast,
Came from the confines of the universe.
Then nearer, more involved and exquisite,
As from the lips of radiant seraphim,
Whose speech is music, ecstasy of love,—
"O Tu es Sacerdos in eternum!"
And far away by those in crimson light,
"Ex utero ante Luciferum
Genui Te!" And from another choir,
Along the trembling spaces of the deep,
In tone majestic, *"Tecum principium!"*

Whether it was the music or the thought
Which dwelt within the music like a spirit,
And brought eternity within my being,
Unfathomable, ere the star of day,
Piercing the dark, shone on created worlds,
Or if it was the overflowing fragrance

That fell like manna on my raptured heart,
Or the unearthly beauty circling round,
Or if it was the most sweet love of Christ,
That wrapped me in an atmosphere of bliss,
I know not now, but this my memory tells—
A moment, spent in that exaltedness,
Were cheaply purchased by a thousand years
Dragged out on earth 'mid care and wretchedness,
For pain may be forgot—that vision, never.
We were within an ocean of delight;
My corporal being seemed not to impede
The music, nor the beauty, nor the love
Which flowed all through me, changing me to them,
As fire pervadeth iron dark and hard!

Within the girdles of another sphere,
Like lazulite on fire, glowing, like blue
Upon a furnace, now mysterious
And pale, now deep, with streams of golden light,
Bright angels, doves of heaven, with azure wings,
Held near their bosoms tongues of living fire,
Which once descended on our twilight earth
And lit, upon the lips of humble men,
The burning eloquence of love divine.
O, holy Spirit of our Lord and God!
Who, mindful of man's weakness, uses ever
To his dim sight on earth, things sensible,
That he may comprehend as much of truth
As lead his wayward spirit up to Thee!
The burning bush of God,—angels like men,—

The Dove, the cloven tongues of fire Thou send'st;
Our blessed Savior, as a mortal man,
Appeared and lived with men, that man might live,
Not with excess of glory cease to be.

Even so, the three-fold spheres of three-fold fire,
Revolving in the One Eternal Light,
Enshrining, permeating, symbolized
The blessed Trinity in Unity.
And Unity in Trinity appeared
As simple; yet my adoration veiled
The human thought and vain desire to grasp
And carry knowledge where it cannot live.
For, though anointed by my guide with strength,
Sustained by peace, and filled with wondering love,
A swift eclipse at intervals came o'er,
Like a pulsation and bedimmed my spirit,
As, when we look on the meridian sun,
Darkness instead of brightness fills our eyes.

From such a trance my silent guide awoke me,
And bent my vision upon other themes;
And whether thought, or subject of the thought
Was first, I could not tell, nor cared to know.
They seemed but one, and yet I still remained
A separate and distinct identity,
Having no memory of a time gone by,
Having no forecast of a time to come,
But one eternal present ever there.

Circled about with beings whose blue eyes
Shone with compassion half, and half with joy,
We saw the Virgin Mother—suppliant,
Half turned from us, with such a winning grace
She gazed, radiant with love, upon her son.
Fairer than beaming planets 'round the moon,
Crowned with white lilies some, themselves as pure,
Some with anemone and jessamine,
Some with pale rosebuds, some with passion-flowers,
Some with the purple violets in their hair,
Hyssop and hyacinth and shining leaves,
Fairer than fairest princess of the earth
Upon her bridal morn, each virgin there,
By turns, and yet as if unconsciously,
"Ave Maria! Gratia plena!" sings;
And soon, from souls redeemed who suffered well,
Good mothers who have seen their children die,
"Ave Maria! Gratia plena!" rings,
As from a harp of many varied strings.

Their azure eyes they lifted in delight,
As if some glorious presence were descending,
And, bending sweetly down, they murmured low,
"Behold the handmaid of the Lord!" And there
We saw, in his divine humanity,
Jesus, most beautiful of women born!
Love, love unfathomable, beamed from His eyes.
I felt this pity glide into my heart,
My gratitude welled upward to my lips,
And filled my swimming eyes with liquid joy;

For 'twas my greatest happiness to weep,
As on those blessed feet and hands I gazed,
Whose wounds for us like living rubies shine.

O, Love! sole conqueror of sin and death!
O, Strength! O, Beauty inexpressible!
Our mortal air is all inadequate,
For, on the borders of unconsciousness
The being trembles that would speak of Thee
As Thou are known within the courts of heaven!

Fainting, I fell upon my face and prayed
That I forevermore might there remain.
But my calm guide, who knew that I must first
Pass through the gloomy portal, gently moved
My prostrate form away, and said to me:
"Along the margin now of yonder river,
Whose light is in itself, we two will glide,
For on its banks a wond'rous garden lies,
Whose flowers form the crown of the elect—
Crowns that can never sere, or pain the brow.
The stream or lake is an immense ellipse,
And neither mouth nor fountain-head is seen;
Yet rivulets of beauty, singing, pour
Themselves into its bosom all along
Its radiant banks at intervals. And see!
As quick as thought, we touch its sparkling shore."

As pebbles on the borders of the sea
Lie strewn in myriads, so do precious stones

Pave the broad fringe with crystals of all hues
And forms, or simple or polygonal,
Of which no lapidary ever dreamed.
The precious opal, like the light of morn,
Blue sapphire and the purple amethyst,
And chrysoberyl with wavy floating light,
And orange sardonyx, and ruby red,
And chrysolite of pale translucent green,
And beryl with its prisms hexagonal,
Jasper and sardius and chrysoprase,
Garnet, or carbuncle, twelve-sided, green,
Deep red, or yellow, or the richest brown;
Emerald, and diamond of the purest fire,
And many more, ne'er seen on this our earth,
Whose names I seemed to know, but know not now,
Lent beauty to each other by their rays,
Reflected and refracted curiously
By rhombus, prism, and polyhedron true.

"Look!" said my guide, we move across the deep;
The garden is an isle elliptical,
In which white-pinioned angels often walk
And blessed saints to watch the coronals.
When the predestined soul that lives on earth
Acquires a virtue that she will not lose,
The garland grows in beauty; all its buds
Or blossoms, leaves or stems or tendrils fine,
Are emblematic of the virtues gained;
And when the soul escapes from death and time,
The wreath is perfected and grows no more.

As indestructible as heaven itself,
Their beauty never fades, no weight they bear,
And in each flower and leaf internal light,
Crimson or green or golden, mildly shines,
As this one which thou seest upon my head.
No two are formed alike; the kinds of flowers
Are without number, of all forms and dyes,
And in their combinations infinite;
Part of that endless beauty which the soul
Through all eternity cannot exhaust.
And wonderful is this too, you will find,
Each bears resemblance to the character
Of that particular soul for which it grows,
And when complete becomes a changeless gem.
Now stoop a little and but look on this!
See! what a matchless purity and grace
Dwell in this snow-white lily, and the rose
Just blushing into love, so near divine.
The crown is nearly perfect; 'tis for one
Who is a virgin and will—" here he paused;
I looked a moment, and I knew 'twas thine,
And likewise knew—though it disturbed me not,
But rather pleased—that thou art not for me
In that most intimate relationship,
As once we thought. O, that this heart were filled
With such a peace again as then I felt!
For in that sphere of spheres no one can say
"This is not good," or feel that aught is wrong,
Or hesitate to trust the secret grace
That urges gently to the better way.

The dream of former days comes to my mind—
"The heavens are stooping down to take thee from me,
And clothe thee with the garments of the just!"

"O, my loved brother! thus I call thee now,
And I will be thy sister evermore!
I am not startled by these strange, strange words;
The thought has been conceived within me, too—
I know not how—but never could have birth
Upon my lips, till it came first from thine.
His broken sentence let us finish thus:
'Who is a virgin, and will so remain.'
I know thou wilt, for thou hast often said
'Our sacrifice is measure of our love.'
Thus we will lift our love above the earth,
Beyond the reach of fortune, time, or change,
That it may bloom before the throne of God!
Tell me some more, tell me some more of heaven!
And turn thine eyes away; all things grow poor,
And fade, and worthless grow, before my soul,
Whilst thou art speaking!"

"Ah! my promised spouse!
I mean my sister and my only friend!
When gravitating towards myself and thee,
The recollection of the vision fades.
Self blinds the soul, celestial things grow dim;
The ear is not attuned to angel song,
The tongue can never find the fitting word,
When throb the pulses for mere private good.

Morn, noon and eve, a northern summer day
Would be consumed in taking one faint glimpse
Of one small part of that first dwelling place,
And I had scarce begun; another time,
When calmer grown, I will resume my story.
Gazing on thee, my human heart becomes
A kind of battle-ground, where now the strife
Shakes so the resolution of my soul,
Which seemed before so steadfast, that wert thou
To waver in the least, we both should fail.

"I kiss thee, as a nun would kiss a child
Who has a mother of its own. And, see!
Imbedded in this little cross of gold,
The ring, which was to be thy marriage ring;
I had it fashioned thus that it might be
Upon thy gentle bosom night and day;
So may our love be hidden in the Cross,
That thy dear head may wear the beauteous crown!

"Come! lean upon me! I will bring thee home;
'Tis later than we thought, and yonder moon
A broader crescent shows against the west
Than when we parted last. Dost thou perceive
How near her disc the planet Venus shines?
Now they are both one light, and now the star
Of evening, and of lovers, is eclipsed!
In this phenomenon some meaning lies
O'erveiled and hidden; shall we say the moon,
Symbol of change and madness, doth obscure
And quench the genial light of Venus, Love?"

"Nay, Hubert, rather say, to suit us now—
Though 'tis a wonder that we look upon—
The moon the symbol is of chastity,
And that our lesser love, like Venus' fire,
Is hidden 'neath a larger light of love!"

CANTO VI—THE END.

Unfathomable providence of God!
O, light inscrutable, by mortal thought!
Pale as a lily on her modest couch
Lies the dear maid Christina; and those eyes
Which but a little while ago were bright
With health and resolution and sweet hope,
Have now a lustre that is not of earth.
Ah! what hath touched the fountains of her life?
Has her pure sacrifice o'erwhelmed her heart
With sad revulsion? Or does love divine
Flood all her being with its silent tides,
In which the mortal functions lose their power?
The priest has been, and with his holy oil
He has anointed her fair hands and feet;
And prayed that God would spare what He has made
So pure and beautiful, to cheer and lead
Souls to love virtue by her loveliness.
He thinks it is a faintness that will pass,
And stirs her thoughts with pleasant holy words,
Which on her pallid lips produce a smile—
A strange, sweet smile, devoid of mortal fear,
Which seems to say, "Unseen within these walls,

The Reaper-angel stands and waits for me!"
The doctor cannot name her malady,
His art avails not in this exigence,
And though some simple medicine he leaves,
He trusts to Nature's old physician, Time,
Who kills and cures, yet only cures to kill,
As He who guides the atom, and controls
The aggregate of nature is ordaining.
Beside her bed a matron sits and sews,
Singing old ballads full of hapless love,
And pious hymns, and soothing lullabies.
Upon a bracket stands a vase of flowers,
And the sweet odor of the briar-rose
And pungent fragrance of the creeping thyme,
Mixed with the lovely sunlight, fills the room,
And makes it like a little nook of heaven,
But for the prostrate form that slumbers there—
Or seems to slumber, rather. To her ear
A step is on the threshold, and she lifts
At that so well-known sound her heavy lids,
Which but disclose two pools, that, brimming o'er
Their dark-fringed barriers, pour the crystal drops
Profusely down her cheeks. Her outstretched hand
He presses to his lips, and with a voice
Breathing compassion in its low sad tone—
"Why dost thou weep, my sister and my love?
O, that I could relieve thee! that I might
Bear all thy pain, or give my strength to thee!"
She answered faintly, "I feel little pain,
But strange prostration, and I only weep

To think that I may leave thee here alone.
If this is death that steals so softly o'er me,
Stilling this buoyant life just in its bloom,
I never thought it was so sweet to die,
Nor ever thought it was so hard to part.
For who will comfort thee when I'm asleep?
Ah! who will lift thee with some words of cheer,
When thy too ardent spirit sinks depressed,
Or sing the songs and hymns thou lovest to hear?
Yet, if I go where prayers can most avail,
Though all unworthy there to find a place,
They shall for thee arise. O, blessed Lord,
Perhaps, in pity to my weakness, thou
Dost take my soul that I may sin no more!
Mercy! my Savior Jesus!"

Suddenly,
A little bubbling blood between her lips
Just rose and fell a moment, and a sigh
From the spent sources of mysterious life,
Like a slow unseen billow heaved her bosom,
Then faded into silence and deep peace.
He, kneeling there and holding her pale hand,
Could not believe the unexpected truth,
Till from the bed a lovely form of life,
The unencumbered counterpart of that
Which cold will soon invade and turn to earth,
Rose like a beauteous vapor of the morning,
And, with another unsubstantial shape,
Lingering a moment o'er the pallid clay,
Vanished together through the air away.

Weep, pilgrim of the earth, so strangely left!
Weep! for thy mortal eyes were made for tears.
Strive not to stop the quickly-falling drops,
Nor stifle suddenly the heavy sigh!
The human heart must bleed, the spirit sink,
And he is ever more or less than man
Who can behold unmoved the moveless form,
Soon to be formless, of the one beloved!
The last expression lingering on the lips
Oft pressed in joy, which harsh necessity
Demands must now be hid and seen no more;
The beauteous vase once lighted from within,
The temple where the immortal spirit dwelt,
Left dark, and tenantless, and desolate.

But she will weep no more—unless for joy!
O, happy one! forever now secure
From summer's scorching heat and winter's cold,
And all the thousand sights of misery
Which will not be relieved, yet dim the eyes
With unavailing tears; from stony hearts
That long have ceased to love, or turned to hate,
From change and pain and darkness and decay.
She feels that heaven which thou but late essayed
In feeble words to picture to her sight
The home of beauty, freedom, love and light.

There is a hill with higher hills around,
Some little distance from the sea-girt town,
On which a chapel, built of rough grey stone,

Stands high above a valley, on whose fields
The grain is changing now from green to gold.
A brook, born of unnumbered busy springs,
Has cut the stubborn rocky ridge in twain,
To free itself, and, like a saintly soul,
Seeks ever to attain the lowest place,
That it may reach its boundless home, the sea.
It sings and fertilizes as it flows,
And mirrors all the lovely things of day,
The foliage, quivering 'gainst the sweet blue lining
Of earth's fair canopy, the bright-plumed bird,
The heavy-laden bee, the happy child,
Who cools his feet, and sees a wondrous world
Of boundless wealth within its pebbled bed.
At night the firefly's spark, the glow-worm's gleam,
The milky girdle of the air, and lights
From star and planet, sink into its breast,
As heavenly thoughts come to the pure of heart.
  Above the streamlet on the rock's worn brow,
Some gloomy pine trees stand in mourning clad,
Beside a little burial ground which slopes
Gently toward the sun; there is the grave!
The first that e'er was hollowed on that hill:
And in its silent bosom they have laid
All that remains of her, so beautiful,
Except her image in one constant breast.
'Tis a lone spot, yet lovely; the wild rose,
Peerless in beauty, blossoms twice a year.
The air is sweet, the murmuring rivulet
Sends from below its soothing lullaby,

And mingles with the odor of the pine.
The sacrifice of everlasting love
Is made within these poor but hallowed walls,
And 'neath these rustic crosses there is rest.

By that secluded spot, a patient man,
Like hermit of the desert, works and prays;
Few are his wishes, and his wants as few;
He drinks the limpid waters from the spring,
That with unwearied bounty gushes forth;
His food, the earth with healthful labor yields.
When he perceives in nature's wondrous life
A hint or symbol of a truth divine,
A correspondence in the things we see
And those we see not, but yet hope to see,
Then has he purest joy; he tastes that food
That he will live on in the life to come.
Far from ambition's dusty road he dwells,
The world well-nigh forgot. In tones subdued,
While sitting lonely by his glow-worm lamp.
He sometimes sings the hymns which once her voice
Pierced with a loving and a holy fire,
That trembling upward to the fountain strove.
And on the long, long summer days he comes
And, on the marble cross above her head,
Hangs the white lily and the crimson rose,
That droop and wither ere the day is done;
Which stirs not now the wellsprings of his grief,
Nor mars his peopled solitude of thought;
For he remembers that, in heaven serene,

He saw the garland that now decks her brow,
And never needs renewal; and that thought
Kindles afresh the vision of that glory,
Untold forever, unimaginable,
Fanning his hope into a deathless flame,
Filling his constant heart with this deep faith:
"True love is purified and crowned by death."

Sonnets of Devil's Lake

TO LOVE.

Oh, to be loved! Oh, better still, "To love!"
Death is in malice, love is the true life;
Vainly they pine who live in loveless strife,
Unmeet for earth below as heaven above.
With love are no vain hopes, or fretting fears:
He makes thy face more beautiful than day,
And in an hour, so sovereign is his sway,
He burns the hatreds of a thousand years.
Our souls he purifies, making us strong
To scale with strenuous wing Truth's ramparts high,
He guards the fountains of immortal song
Lest frost should freeze the streams and mankind die;
Love begets beauty and from beauty springs,—
Thine eyes look from the shadow of his wings.

MY HUSBAND.

If friends should leave me, thou wilt never leave me;
If fortune fail, I know thou wilt not fail me;
Thou wilt be near if slander should assail me,
And never, never, as I think, deceive me.
O thou art mine! Forgive me if I grieve thee;
My health is fitful, and my name is Eve.
Around thy heart a silken web I weave
Which thou hast not the power to break, believe me,
With all thy strength of reason. Mystery,
The mystery of life, with woman dwells,
With purest love her pallid bosom swells,
And from her bonds man never can be free.
Though rosy youth is past I sway thy will,
My beauty fades, and yet you love me still.

THE ELEPHANT.

Sometime in life we all may recollect
We paid too much to see the Elephant:
Some wind-bag full of impudence and cant,
The famous mouth-piece of some horrid sect,
Some woolly horse, or bearded giantess,
Some great tragedian, or tragedienne,
Praised in advance by many a purchased pen,
Made more our prudence and our purses less.
But here, with no expense, except our breath
A little quickened, the huge beast we find
Couchant, in rude time-sculptured stone, stone-blind
And deaf and moveless. But i' faith!
To climb, then read this sonnet, makes me pant;
Here we will rest beside the Elephant.

THE PRECIPICE.

"Doves' eyes and drooping lids, what do you mean?
To dare me or invite me now to take
A kiss?" What if this fragment here should break
And we should topple downwards? Lo! we lean
Upon the brink of the dread precipice:
The rocks below in wild confusion hurled,
Seem like the wreck of a volcanic world,
And yon blue mere, now cool and smooth as ice,
Was once perhaps a crater filled with fire.
Upon the brink of an abyss we feel
A 'wildering fascination o'er us steal
To plunge down headlong and in air expire.
Give me thy hand, before our senses reel,
To lower and to safer ground retire.

GRATITUDE.

Oh! if to praise the beauty of thy lips,
The beauty of thine eyes and eyelids fair,
The beauty of thy forehead and thy hair,
The jewel that between thy nostrils dips,
Thy nose, thy cheeks, thy chin, thy attitude,
Thy almost perfect form, thy gait, thy dress,—
If to praise these be sin, I shall confess
Myself a sinner. But, ingratitude
Were a still darker sin: and we must own
That many days have fled since man has seen
So much of loveliness. Upon this stone
Sit thou! nor with thy veil thy features screen,
And I will paint thee, and by this atone
For those who to thy beauty blind have been.

HONEYMOON.

Look at that pair in this new Paradise!
They walk together slowly on the shore,
They climb the lichened rocks; the pretty lore
Of plants and shells is worthless in their eyes,
So calm and full they seem of one another:
They do not count how rich they are in joy,
But feel that prying, chattering crowds annoy,
And so avoid them as a bore and bother.
All blessings be upon them! Girl and boy
Have changed to resolute man and wife sedate,
Equal to any fortune, fight, or fate,
So they be true and mutual love employ;
Defy all hatreds and all hateful force,
Death or the Devil or the damned Divorce.

EXTERNAL BEAUTY.

Far from its margin shrunk I've seen a lake,
Its waters turbid and its once smooth breast
By paltry tempests ruffled and oppressed,
And none would visit it his thirst to slake;
While round its winding shore the blossoming trees
Sent forth their perfume, and the feathered choir
Filled all the air with songs that never tire,
And flowers ope'd their bosoms to the bees.
So, beautiful lady! from that form of thine,
To which all similies were poor and strained,
Where roses bloom 'mong lilies azure veined,
Through which a heavenly spirit well might shine,—
The soul from this fair boundary has receded,
And for thy love no heart sincere has pleaded.

DARK BEAUTY.

Dark are thy tresses as the raven's plume,
Dark are those eyebrow-arches, fine and true;
Dark are the fringes of thine eyelids, too,
And dark the orbs made darker by their gloom.
Let blue-eyed maid her sunny ringlets prize,
And all the rosy tints upon her face;
Her fitful color comes and goes apace,
As joy elates, or sorrow fills her sighs.
Not so with thee,—whose loveliness remains
Unchanged, unmarred by flush of pain, or gladness.
Would I could paint that sweet and holy sadness
Which so becomes thee—yet renews my pains!
Thy dusky cheek all others that I see
Shames by its beautiful monotony!

SOUL BEAUTY.

No type of beauty which the arts admire
Will claim one feature of thy gentle face;
What charm is thine, then, lady? or what grace,
That old and young to gain thy smile aspire
And think it priceless? From thy faded cheek
The bloom has fled, thy forehead is not fair,
Nor dark nor golden is thy modest hair,
And symmetry in thee in vain we seek.
What is it but the beautiful soul arisen
Superior to her earthly house's plan,
And gained from that defaced and fragile prison
And from its doom, thro' love, a sweet exemption?
Thy homely visage proves the "Fall of Man"—
Thy dear angelic temper, his redemption!

A FROWN.

Lady! to-day thou shalt not break my peace,
Thy frowning brow restores my liberty;
Thy smile can make a willing thrall of me,
But not thy gathered brows. O blest release!
I hung upon those lips, a captive pale,
Watching the playful roses clip thy breath,
As if my life flowed from them, or my death.
That look has woven me a coat of mail.
Adown life's stream henceforth, with pleasant sail,
I glide, and see thy beauty's moonlight beam,
As if I saw it not: the witching veil
Thro' which I saw thee in deceitful dream
Is thus withdrawn, and if I love thee still,
I say, "Farewell! Heaven keep thee from all ill!"

OPTIMISM.

Nothing is evil in the universe.
All things that ever were, or are, are good—
In substance, figure, color, size or mood
And place and time forever. No reverse
Uttered has been through all the heavens, star-strewed;
Each orb in its appointed path is singing,
And on eternal truth its radiance flinging;
No life on earth, however dim or rude,
Unblest by love and joy. The Supreme Will,
All Love, all Wisdom, and all Might, for aye
Fulfills, unthwarted and unthwartable,
His purpose—hid in light to us of clay.
O when this vision here can make me thrill,
What will life be where Light of Light is day?

SIMPLE WANTS.

With the excess of comfort we had grown
Uncomfortable. O, what strange delight!
We mount this rugged pathway like a sprite,
And at the top we sit upon a throne.
The beams of morning strike the western hill,
The birds are singing for us, and the breeze
Stirs the pale birches and the dark pine trees,
The pool below is shadowy and still.
Blessed be simple wants and common things!
The limpid water from the hollowed hand,
The fish just roasted o'er a burning brand,
Plain bread and butter—even the sand that clings
About our feet seems precious,—all is good
To thee and me in this delicious mood.

IDOLATRY.

"My idol is the true divinity
Who shields me from all ills and sends me good:
How dare you spatter him with filthy mud?
For this you will be damned eternally!"
"Pooh, pooh! I'll run the risk; yours is no god,
Only mashed paper moulded to a shape:
If placed near mine, 'tis just as if an ape
Stood by a man." "Liar! 'tis cedar wood
That never rots, made by the god himself."
"Well, well, 'tis wooden,—mine is alive and eats,
And gives me food, and fills my purse with pelf:
The sours he sends to you—to me the sweets."
Each on his neighbor glares as if he'd slay him,
Each to the deaf sky turns and screams, "Te Deum!"

QUARTZITE.

You ask of me, a heavy railroad man,
To scribble verses about trees and rocks?
I'd rather find the rise and fall of stocks.
And this last scheme, the grandest, weigh and scan.
What is this quartzite good for? blast the thing!
If we could polish it for monuments
For all illustrious men and great events
And raise them in Chicago, it might bring
A handsome revenue. Well! for the rest,
Water is good for watering and for steam,
And trees for ties and fuel,—but this dream
Of "lovely picturesqueness," is a pest.
Yonder the cars come, round the "Devil's Nose;"
Dwarfed by these cliffs they crawl with laboring throes.

THE LAST.

I am the last in this fair company,
And least and youngest, therefore pray excuse me
In that I could not, 'tho I tried hard, choose me
A subject for a sonnet! I could see
The gentlemen all beating of their brains,
Bewildered much and lost to all delight,
As if it were so difficult to write!
I hope they will have praises for their pains
From those they have been flattering. I am still
In maiden fancy free and whole of heart,
And have no right to use the poets' art;
Besides, by using but a little skill,
I could—as no one flattered me—discover
I am the only one who has no lover.

Note—In the summer of 1878 a pleasure party, composed of young people and old, wedded and single, spent some time at Devil's Lake, Wis. It was proposed that they should each compose a sonnet, everyone choosing his own subject. The most of them shirked their job; hence Mr. Durward's souvenir collection from which the foregoing are a selection.—Ed.

Later Poems

TO THE WISCONSIN RIVER.

Flow onward, mighty river of the land
  Where my first roof-tree rose!
Sweep onward o'er thy fields of shining sand,
  And all thy islands, where the wild vine grows
Lifting its purple tendrils to the light,
Cheer with thy waters bright!

Within thy bowers the wood-doves coo unseen;
  Thy matted coverts hide
The timid doe beneath their leafy screen,
  And her young fawn steps wondering at her side;
They in thy shallows dip their ebon feet,
In sultry summer heat.

Two hundred years ago, upon thy wave
  Sailed one whose honored name
Has made thy waters dear—the good, the brave
  Marquette, whose heart and soul were all aflame
With love of God and His poor children here—
A love that casts out fear.

Perhaps beside this rocky bluff, alone,
  He watched yon dark-green pine
Clutch with his strenuous roots the rifted stone;
  Like noble poverty that scorns to whine,
A sturdy patriarch on a rugged soil
That triumphs in his toil.

Like a fair girl with ribbons round her tied,
  The slender birch tree rears
Its tattered, creamy stem against the side
  Of the gray rock; the rock as background bears
All lovely tints, from Nature's pallette made,
For shadow, light and shade.

O, from thy far off sandy reservoir,
  And from thy groovèd rocks
Pour down, as now, obstructions evermore;
  The sand-bar that, forever shifting, mocks
The wheels of commerce, that thy calm, sweet air
No sound of traffic bear!

Soul-searing Traffic! the foul lust of gain,
  Beauty's destroyer, death
To the sweet fellowship of man, thy stain
  Dims the pellucid stream, and taints heaven's breath,
Widens the gulf betwixt the rich and poor;
O, come not near this shore!

Sweep onward, mighty river of the land
  Where death first visited
My lowly dwelling, and with icy hand,
  Chilled the warm streams that from my heart were fed.
On! on! like life, like time! We haste, like thee,
On to the peaceful sea.

ST. MARY'S OF THE PINES.

Dear retreat for mortal wearied
With turmoil,
Take me to your sheltering bosom!
Soothe my brain with nature's gladness,
Pour the balm and wine and oil!
Dull routine my life has wounded
Nigh to sadness;
Give me in your wildernesses
Change of toil!

And ye springs that gush and sparkle
As you pour
From your never-failing fountains,
From your dark, mysterious prison,
Swelling still the streamlet's store;
Laughing to the light of morning
Newly risen,
Let me join with your sweet murmurs
One voice more.

From the unseen came I also,
By the might
Of the Eternal Fount of Being,
Through the darksome ways of error,
Far more dismal than the night
Of your hidden stony barriers;
From that terror
By the hand of mercy lifted
Into light.

Streamlet! daughter of a thousand
Limpid springs!
On thou speedest like an angel
With a healing benediction
Folded underneath his wings;
Warbling sweetest as thou meetest
Contradiction
From rude stones on which the lichen
Feeds and clings.

Oh, that I could scatter blessing
Like to thee!
That my soul could mirror beauty
As thy bosom's liquid crystal!
That my songs might be as free,
Varied, lasting as thy singing!
Then should list all
Mortals to my strain—a minstrel
I should be.

Pines! that heal the air with perfume,
Towering high,
Decked with cones for jewels, pendent
In your green immortal vesture,
Though your heads are in the sky,
Yet, like mortal man beneath you,
You must rest your
Feet upon the solid fabric,
Or must die.

Lend my verse the balsam odor
Of your tears!
And the color of your needles,
And the heavenward direction
Of your stems, which rise like spears,
That my song may still point upward
From dejection
And the basis of the earthly
To the spheres!

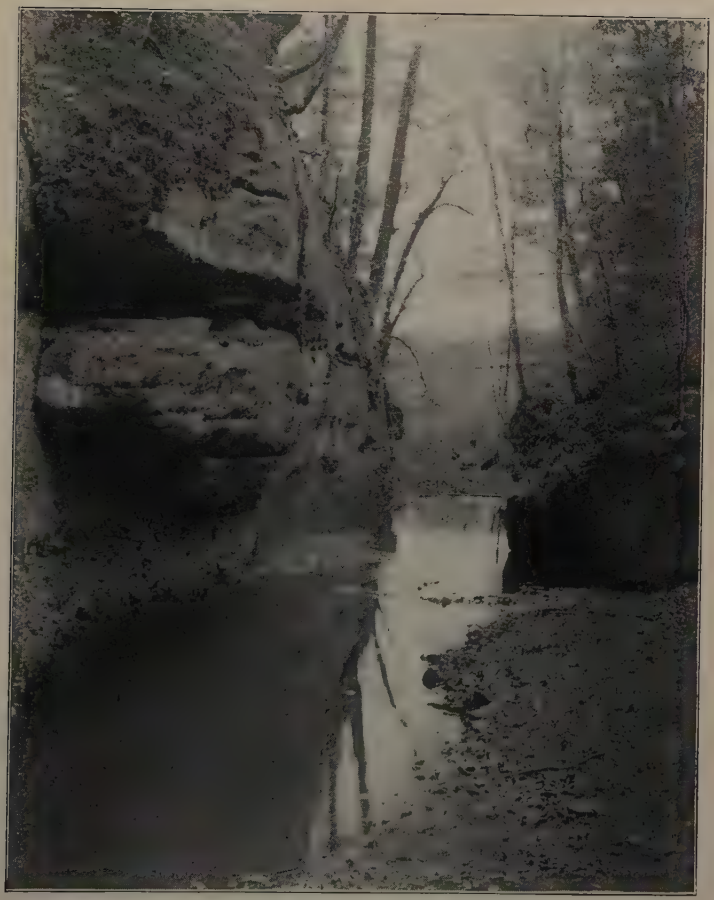
Rocks! that Time has worn to grandeur
With his breath!
Steadfast as a righteous canon,
High above the vanished ages,
Moveless 'mid surrounding death;
How your silence and your shadows
Shame my pages!
Doomed to crumble, as the leaves
My feet beneath.

Little chapel! rude and lonely
To the eye,
How thy white cross in the sunlight
Gleams, and prompts a prayer in whispers!
Shall my mouldering ashes lie
Blest and near thee, though unheeding
Song of Vespers,
Or the Kyrie Eleison's
Plaintive cry?

Gorge of beauty! sweetly nestled
'Mong the hills;
Far removed from sordid traffic,
Filled with springs forever weeping
Through the rocks in mossy rills—
Shall my lowly memory linger
In thy keeping,
When this heart which now is throbbing
Silence fills?

Yes! a little while my footsteps
May be known;
And the hearts that I have cherished
Will remember me in yonder
Sacred symbol in the stone!
They will say, "His hand engraved it!"
And with fonder
Accents of affection whisper,
"He is gone!"

"Gone! above this transient vision
Of a day;
Upward springing through the azure,
Upward to the Source of Beauty,
From the strife of sin and clay,
Soared his spirit to Our Savior,
As the levin
Through the clouds of storm and darkness
Cleaves its way."



THE GLEN—LOOKING OUT.

MINNEHAHA.

For Music.

If I had a farm near the Minnehaha,
If I had a farm near the Minnehaha,
I'd pack up my traps and gang quickly awa,
If I had a farm near the Minnehaha.

If I had a cot near the Minnehaha,
Upon that same farm near the Minnehaha,
Tho' lowly and rude to keep off the cauld blaw
I'd soon turn my face to the Minnehaha.

Within that same cot by the Minnehaha,
That vine-covered cot by the Minnehaha,
If the lassie whose soul is as white as the snaw
Would abide, we would laugh with the Minnehaha.

If Heaven would smile near the Minnehaha,
And earth yield her fruits near the Minnehaha
And some cherubs with her eyes from Heaven would fa',
'Twere a foretaste of Heaven near the Minnehaha.

In peace we would live near the Minnehaha,
In love we would live near the Minnehaha,
Frae the big hollow warld and its cares far awa,
And bless Him who poured out the Minnehaha.

FAITH.

The latest tremblings of the vesper song
Up through the vaulted roof to God had flown,
When forth with noiseless tread a woman stepped;
And, as she passed, she dipped her fingers in
A little pool of water in a stone,
And, bending gently, touched her forehead fair,
Hanging a crystal bead thereon, which looked
Like morning dew-drop on a lily bloom.
Her eyelids drooped, as if she looked within
On her own heart, and found that peace was there;
And her curved lips, scarce parted, with the one
Beneath drawn back in sweet obedience,
Told that the highest feeling led the rest
In chains of mild humility and love.
Never did queenly head with jeweled crown
Look half so fair; so fit for life, so fit
For death, as that meek woman with the star
Of faith upon her unpretending brow.
Place me the heaviest doubt from skeptic brain
Against this tiny, limpid water drop,
And it will be but darkness beside light,
No beside yes, what is not by what is.
Or, bring the record of the highest deed
That ever yet hath been performed by man
Upon the battle-field; or, more obscure,
And only seen from heaven's point of view,

On the unnoticed battle-field of life,
And Faith will claim the treasure as her own.
Strong is the sword that love of freedom wields—
Bear witness every land that keeps a name;
And swift the arm that earthly passion moves—
Bear witness every heart that ever loved;
But stronger, swifter, more enduring far
The thought that links the spirit to her God.

MILWAUKEE.

City of Ladies fair, fairer and fairest!
City of palaces and spires and towers,
Which on thy hills and plains, like jewel-flowers
Upon the bosom of a bride, thou bearest!
City of Men, endowed with ample powers
Of love and wisdom, courage, strength and art,
Who see their duty in true honor's chart
When the sun shines, or when the tempest lowers!
Thy sea-like lake and many a fertile land
Pour their vast riches in thy lap—and free
And magic-like thy boundaries expand
Into futurity! In pensive mood,
How many cherished memories of thee
Light up the dimness of my solitude.

GRAPES AND WINE.

I.

On a steep hill's stony face,
Where the sun on rising shines
And the sour, wild grape was growing,
I have cleared a pleasant space—
Little art or science showing,
Save in choosing such a place—
And have planted precious vines,
All improved with mickle care:
Isabella, Delaware,
Concord, Lady, Muscadine;
Bertha, Thecla, and Louise,*
Loved by singing birds and bees;
Pale Rebecca, seldom seen,
Agawam and Creveling;
Chasselas, Catawba—and
Other names I here pass by,
Brought to this our favored land
From the older eastern clime,
Not so suitable to string,
For a vineyard rosary,
On the rough thread of my rhyme.

Spring has come and frost has fled,
And the downy buds are swelling;
Who could stay within his dwelling,
Palace, house, or wooden shed,
When the year and day, awake,
Winter's death with songs are knelling?

*Named for Misses Patmore, Durward and Claude.

Tie the brown arms of the vine
Firmly to the cedar stake;
Soon the bud a shoot will make,
Soon the wandering tendrils, swaying
Through the balmy air, will twine
Like the rosy fingers, straying,
Half transparent at the tips,
Of an infant three days old
Vaguely groping round to find
Something that is joy to hold
For his soft and dewy lips.

Strong, and light, and creamy white
Basswood bark (the swaddling bands),
Binds the tender pliant stems,
(So the mother holds the hands
Of her babe while feeding it),
That their leaves may drink the light,
Cooling dew, and gentle rain,
And resist the wind's rude strain.

Lo! the blossom-buds expand!
How they, noiselessly, the air
With their heavenly fragrance fill!
While the birds in many a pair
By their love-songs clear and bland
Make the silence throb and thrill.

Further on I now can see,
In a pleasing revery,
Half concealed beneath the leaves,

Heavy clusters ripening,
And the smoky bloom that weaves
A veil around, as if to screen
The beauty of their coloring—
Purple, amber, or pale green—
With a little glint of gold
In the berries, by the sheen
Of the sunlight through them seen.

None of these can e'er be sold,
Or a source of profit prove;
Some are like to drops of honey—
Never should be grown for money—
Only for some looks of love.

Ah! for beauty and for use
What can with this plant compare?
Painters never tire in painting
Vines with clusters hanging ripe;
They for man are food and drink,
Growing with but little care,
And the overplus of juice
Left will turn to something fine
That inspires the minstrel's pipe,
And revives the heart when fainting.
Bring me, child, a cup of wine!
That I may the better think
How to praise this gift divine,
And my praises to enhance
By a genial temperance.

II.

See! as it from the crystal teems,
How rich and clear the liquid ruby gleams!
Exhaling fragrance as a favored flower,
Or bush of sweet-briar when the beams
Of sunshine chase the flying shower.

O, sons and daughters of the race of man,
You that delight to scan
The good and fair
On earth, in sea, and air!
This is the gift, with "honey, milk and oil,"
Promised by clear-eyed prophets old
To sweeten toil
For those who have received and keep that law
Which has no flaw,
And prize it more a hundred fold
Than wine or gold.
Wine suits all seasons, hot or cold,
Or freeze, or thaw,
The happy birthday and its dear return,
Or when, our loved ones gone to rest, we mourn.
Wine, to the marriage festivals,
Adds a fresh joy and lustre with its light,
Golden, or red, or like the diamond bright,
And to the feeble pulse of age recalls
The genial glow of summer and of youth;
Wine to the poet, sage or saint displays
In unguessed ways

Unclouded realms of love and truth,
Whose beauty never palls.
From top-most tendril-curl to hidden root—
Stem, leaf and blossom and the luscious fruit,
A marvel of creation is the vine
That yields the joy-producing creature, Wine.

III.

"Wine cheers the heart of God and man,"
And in His kingdom we shall drink it new,
If through life's little span
We have been true,
Sprinkling the honey dew
Of charitable thoughts and deeds
On human flowers and (seeming) human weeds.

A higher praise? then let our hearts expand
And even dimly understand
The mystic metaphor—
"I am the True Vine;" and that "Vine" adore
In love and joy and wonder, evermore.

The Poet in His Garden

THE RAINBOW.

With wonders pregnant, the pure beams of light
Pour forth exhaustless from the god of day;
Then, swift as thought, through myriads of spheres,
Which rain-clouds scatter on the dusty earth,
The ever-glorious arch—looked at by God—
Is born, like love itself, 'mid smiles and tears!
Old as the flood, and yet forever young;
Unchanged and true, yet fresh as paradise;
From ancient Ararat, or this green turf,
Thou art the same dear token of the promise,
The same strange arc from God's own signet-ring,
As when a child I ran across the moor,
On scented thyme and purple heather bells,
To catch a handful of thy radiance!
O, Color! beauty dwells with thee for aye!
The loveliest line that Nature ever drew
Is but a beggar on thy skirts divine!
Thine are the spells that witch and win the world,
Thine are the mornings, and the burning evens,
And the great sapphire vault, and the wide sea!
And thou dost clothe our earth with emerald,
And through our dear humanity dost speak
Of Him in whose own likeness we were made!
The universe in thee, deep and serene,
All folded up in mystic beauty, lies;

Light is thy god-head, and the triple dyes
Thy trinity; thy blessed sacraments,
The seven rainbow tints; and on, and on,
Through spaces measureless of grey and gloom,
Until we reach where outer darkness dwells.
Great God! how truly happy is the soul
Who, from the point which thou hast meant, doth look
Upon the opulence of this bright world;
Placing in just and sweet relationships
The wondrous lovelinesses link by link,
Until they form a ladder up to Thee!
Who mounts, sustained by grace, the shining steps,
His back to darkness turned, his face to light,
Yet calm and patient waits that certain hour
When he will see this beauty that he loves
Grow pale in that of which he never dreamed!

MADONNA OF THE ROSE.

[A design for a painting.]

I dreamed I saw Our infant Lord
Upon his Virgin Mother's knee,
With a red blossom in his hand
From off a wild rose tree.

From it he pulled the petals five,
And with his mouth, so sad and sweet,
He kissed them one by one, and placed
Them on his side and hands and feet.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

With leathern girdle round his loins
And vestment made of camel's hair,
His dark locks lifted by the wind,
His forehead brown, his bosom bare—
The mighty herald of the Lord
Upon the rocky hillside stands,
And o'er the sinful wilderness
He stretches forth his wasted hands.

"I am the voice of one who cries:
'Prepare the way through deserts drear!
Make straight the paths of God! for now
Heaven's kingdom surely draweth near!
Repent! Repent! for, lo! He comes
By poet-prophet long foretold,
The Holy One whose sandal-strings
I am unworthy but to hold;
Whose fan is in His hand, and He
Will swiftly purge his threshing floor
And garner up the wheat, but burn
The chaff with fire, for evermore!"

The fountain gushes from the rock—
His words are as a fountain poured
Upon the heart that, startled, springs
And longs to leave its sins abhorred.

He moveth downward to the plain
With heart and lips on fire with love,
And sees a radiant shaft of light
Rebind the earth to heaven above.

He feels once more as when he leapt
For joy within his mother's womb,
What time the lowly, spotless maid,
More pure than dew on lily bloom,
Dear, sole unstained humanity,
Came, with the mystery of heaven
All folded up in mortal weeds,
That mortal man might be forgiven,

For, with his eyes so calm and bright,
And with his soul—a morning star
That ushers in the light supreme,—
He sees the Savior from afar;
And hastening to the river's brink
With joy akin to seraphim,
Yet hid in deep humility
That deeper grows, the nearer Him,

He fills the hollow of his hand
From Jordan's sunlit wave, and, lo!
The ever-hallowed work is done,
The mighty work he came to do.
Now for the dungeon's waiting gloom,
Where soul and body they will sever,
And head from trunk—O, joy for him!
That he may reign a saint forever.

THE ECLIPSE OF THE EVENING STAR.

I.

Sweet Star, that smilest on the parting day,
  Why dost thou sail so near that sinking moon?
  Thou art the Star of Love—Love's starry boon
To eyes whose love shall never know decay;
Those changeful horns now wax, now wane away,
  And never for two nights remain the same;
  Thy lamp, O, Hesper! burns with steady flame,
Like love that even 'mid pain and death will stay.
Ah! nearer still? Alas! beloved of eve!
  That symbol of pale madness will eclipse
  Thy light—as lovely faces with false lips,
That seem all fair on purpose to deceive,
  Blot out the love (by cold ingratitude),
  Which would have been their own beatitude.

II.

Now thou art hidden; and this world of ours
  Seems like the desert sky without thy ray.
  Vain man has spurned the Good Supreme away,
And in its place he worships and devours
Himself. For in the loss of heavenly love,
  True, simple human love must fade and die;
  So heartless fickleness and madness lie
On hearts still true, as the cold moon above
The sweetest star of heaven:—O, not forever!
  Like a white lily, lifting into light
  Its starry petals, sparkling pure and bright
Upon the heaving bosom of the river,
  Love will shine forth to warm the world anew,—
  As thou, undarkened now, shinest in yonder blue!

THE LADY ELGIN.

1861.

Heave as thou listest, sullen lake,
And roll thy muddy breakers on the shore!
For me thy beauty all is gone,
My loved ones from thy depths return no more.

Have mercy, Lord! far down I see
Those lips that I so oft have pressed to mine;
Those locks my happy fingers smoothed
Sway to and fro, like weeds in ocean's brine.

Those eyes—ah! me, how faded now!
Their lamps are out, their spirit passed away;
And that cold, pallid, marble brow,
Dim through the twilight deep, is only clay.

O, leave, poor heart of mine, this sight!
O, leave this vision of the weltering deep,
Lest thou sink down, and cease to beat,
Thinking the waters can thy treasures keep!

Up through the dawning of that morn,
  Stormy for us upon this raft of Time,
They passed, on Mary's natal day,
  The portals of that life which is sublime.

O, Consolator! Mother dear!
  Thou that hast looked on His pale, bleeding head,
Thou that hast heard His last faint sigh,
  Who died that he might lift us from the dead,

O, whisper "Mercy!" in his ear
  O, speak that little word with thy pure breath!
Mother of sorrows! hear! O, hear!
  So that my loved ones may not sleep in death.

Jesus, our Brother, give them rest!
  Jesus, our Savior, take them to thy peace!
Jesus, bind up our bleeding hearts!
  Which but for Thee must bleed till time shall cease.

SUNRISE.

[IN NOVEMBER.]

The morning star now fades in larger light,
That springs above the eastern verge of earth,
And frost like diamond-dust is on the leaves,
And thick white mists are brooding o'er the stream;
No song of birds is heard to greet the morn,
Nature hath folded life beneath her wings,
And patient sits, 'mong leafless trees, forlorn.

But lo! to turn her thoughts from withered joys,
The banners of the sun, all bright with gold,
Rise up against the sky; and near behind
The sun himself, with step of majesty,
The even majesty of Time and Fate,
Mounts to his flaming chair, and with his beams
Lights up with beauty all the faded world.

O Lord of Light! so burst upon my soul
On that great morning when all nature lies
Withered and pale, and dead, beneath Thy feet—
O then this little spark of dust remember,
Whose tenant now—relying upon Thee—
Leaps over the 'To come," and rests her foot,
All trembling, with anticipated bliss.

GUARDIAN ANGEL TO A SOUL.

"Lovely, wondering human soul,
Come to light, and joy, and peace!
Here is that which knows no change,
Here thy sorrows all shall cease;
Scorching sun and biting wind,
Every ill is left behind.

"Yon dark menial sent to take
Thy worn mantle at the door
In his lean and bony hands,
Comes to cloud thine eyes no more;
For the Master saith, 'within
Neither enters—death nor sin!'

"Much of evil thou hast known,
Wandering in the streets of time,
Justice sold, and talents used
To defend and cherish crime.
Now no more can fretting thought
Turn thy happiness to naught.

"Near the rose the thorn was hid,
Near the honey was the sting,
Fragile were the things beloved;
Though the blossoms came with spring,
By the blight the fruit was lost,
By the canker-worm or frost.

"Oh! the soul who loveth truth
While she lives on earth must sigh
For herself and all around;
Doubtless it is gain to die
When the Lord shall lend a spear
And a light to help her here.

"Let us stay our steps awhile
Here within these crystal walls,
Where the air is fragrant joy
And the light in showers falls,
Till its sacred calm shall heal
All thou didst in dying feel.

"Strange is death! we know it not;
Yet that look of thine,—so lost,
As if left by all the world—
Touched me, as the shadow crossed,
Dimming thy sweet, lustrous eyes—
Then I swiftly snatched my prize,

"Bore thee hence on rapid wing
Through the clinging mists and clouds
Many hued and wonderful,
Which the twilight earth enshrouds,
Through that space where, form unknown,
Stainless color reigns alone.

"Thou hast seen these sheltering plumes,
Thou hast seen the patient hand
That, from hidden gulfs of sin,
Saved thee by a silken band,
And I bless the holy Rood,
I have seen thy gratitude.

"Oh, what joy is this I feel!
I the holy Will have done—
Brought thee from a prison house.
Now, thy endless life begun,
I must leave thee; yonder morn
Breaks, and my new charge is born.

"Ever blessed be the Light!
Ever blessed be the Love!
Ever blessed be the Power,
Flowing from the fount above,
Never wearied, never spent!"
He sang—and on his errand went.

A VOICE FROM PURGATORY.

The light of mortal life has faded,
  The earth has passed away,
The raven-plume of death has shaded
  The lamps of night and day.
Dim twilight here surrounds us solely,
  We yearn, we faint, we pine
To tread that shore so bright and holy,
  To see our Lord Divine!

Like stars the angels hover o'er us,
  And watch on silent wing
The ray divine sent to restore us,
  Then down they sweep and sing,—
They sing, they take the pure from near us,
But us, alas! they leave,
As if they neither see nor hear us,
  And yet we sob and grieve.

Ah! when shall we be freed from sorrow?
  This pain of hope—this stain?
O, when shall dawn on us that morrow,
  Ne'er, ne'er to fade again?
If friends on earth could hear our sighing,
  And see our streaming eyes,
And feel this hope which seems like dying,
  More prayers for us would rise!

GOOD, BETTER, BEST.

I.

God saw all things that he had made were *good*—
The light, the firmament, the earth, the sea,
And all that over, on, or in them be,
The herb and tree that bear fruit-seed for food,
The fish, the creeping thing, the bird, the beast,
In wonderful gradation up to man,
Who bears, however faint, or dim, or wan,
The image of his Maker. Forth to the feast
Of life, in beauty and in joy he goes,
And suffers loss that he may measure pain,
Finds that his happinesses to his woes
Are as a thousand pleasures to one pain,
Yet that one pain so clamorous it throws
Into his songs and hymns a mournful strain.

II.

Better than good to make man Christ the Lord,
Long promised and long-looked-for, came—a man.
He spoke, and those with holy hunger ran
And lived a higher life upon His Word.
They clasp the pain and suffering of love
In meekness, patience and humility,

Despise the low delight of cruelty,
Wise as the serpent, harmless as the dove.
The horrid judgments of the darker time
And temporary ceremonial cease.
Glory to God! to men of good will, peace!
High hopes of an eternity sublime
Illume their ways with beauty—but on earth
The highest has not yet the perfect birth.

III.

Good, Better, *Best*—The Holy Spirit comes
Promised by Him from whom all light proceeds,
And to the highest bliss high mankind leads,
(Far from delusive discord that benumbs
Like cold and darkness), by the still, small voice,
Wakening within the perfect love of truth,
Harsh discipline relaxes, sweetest ruth
Leads up the low ones to pure lasting joys,
Earth merges into Heaven, and Christ at last
Reigns in all hearts for whom He died and lives.
Nature and Grace agree; the past is past.
In cycles three, yet one, the Holy gives
To man, His best beloved, such treasure—vast
As countless sands, rain-drops, or forest leaves!

IV.

And this Eternal Trinity is One,
Seen dimly in all things and felt by man,
Within his soul and heart of heart,
Most clearly when he sees that right and good,
Justice and mercy are forever done
To everyone beyond or 'neath the sun,
And deems this mystery of sin the small
And necessary discord in the high
And never-ending harmony of God.
In this, O Lord of love and light, I rest
As simple babe upon its mother's breast.

A NUPTIAL MASS.

A bride I saw before the altar kneel,
  And fair indeed was she,
And to my searching eye she seemed to feel
  The beautiful solemnity.

A full blown rose, the color of her lips,
  Was in her hair,
And five sweet rosebuds, crimson at the tips,
  Were nestled there.

I thought: if each unfold and be a rose
  Lovely as this now seen,
Were I the husband I had rather chose
  Instead of five—fifteen!

TIME.

Higher up on the banks of this stream
We have buried some friends that we love,
And we planted a cross on each newly-raised mound,
And a prayer in the heavens above.
They were beautiful, truthful, or wise,
And their virtuous deeds to the last
Generations of men should be prized and proclaimed—
But this river is rushing so fast.

'And the crosses will crumble to dust,
And the low, narrow dwellings sink down,
And the prayer for their peace we may often forget,
And their beauty, or worth, or renown.
And we cannot return 'gainst the tide
Nor back o'er the rapids we've past,
Tho' we fain would return and their mem'ry renew—
But this river is rushing so fast.

TO ERATO.

Beside this stream,
Where lately thou hast been,
I sit and muse or dream.
And whispering say:
"Seen or unseen,
Or near,
Or far away,
Or mine, or no, or never to be seen by me again,
This much is clear,
This much is plain:
She still is beautiful; she still is dear,
And will forever so remain."

This senseless brook
That rushes river-ward with babbling noise
Could not preserve upon its mirrors cold
Thy image and that look
That made my soul rejoice;
Which in my heart I hold
Far dearer than the merchant does his gold.

What art thou then to me?
I cannot tell to any one but thee:
Let heartless people say in heartless times—
"She was not real,
Only an ideal
Jeweled hook, on which he hung his rhymes."

THE SOUL'S CROSS.

My heart is sad, but not with sullen sadness
Or hopeless gloom;
And yet a grief not to be changed to gladness
This side the tomb.

Sometimes the spirits of the bravest droop
In life's long fight,
To see how vain their labor, and yet know
Their aim was right.

The truth and beauty which we see with joy
And fain would show,
But, chilled and saddened, turn our hearts from hearts
That never glow;

The efforts that we make those wounds to close
That will not heal,
And all the feeling that we spend on those
Who do not feel,

Depress us with a shy and voiceless sorrow
That prompts our pride
A smile of unconcern to vainly borrow,
Defeat to hide.

O, sad physician! seeing deadly sores,
Those fain wouldst heal,
And holding in thy hand the sovereign balm
For mortal weal,

Yet still must hear thy patients scoff at thee
And turn away
To try and dream that they are rich and well,
And free and gay!

This is the crucifixion of the soul,
Which maketh groan
Unheard the chosen priesthood of the world,
Apart, alone.

FATE.

Brother of Time! twin-born of ancient Night,
By man called destiny, and Providence;
Traveler between the dead eternity
And the unborn eternity to come;
Majestic, silent, irresistible!
The sure executive of God thou art;
All bend to thee, or, if they strive against,
Their striving but fulfills thy dread command.
Impelled by thee, the circling planets roll
Their ceaseless song up through the azure vault,
Where crossing streams of radiance mix and light
The vast cathedral of the universe!
Vain to repine at that which cometh not—
Vain to regret the joy that's passed away—
Vain all our prayers to turn thy rushing tide—
If that our prayers were but a part of thee!

"SUPER FLUMINA BABYLONIS."

Silent we sat by the rivers of Babylon,
When we remembered Zion, we wept;
In the midst of the willows our harps we suspended,
In their mute strings joy and melody slept.

Because they who as captives had led us away, said,
"Sing of that Zion 'round which your hearts cling!"
O, how shall we sing in the land of the stranger
The song of the Lord? O, how shall we sing?

Oh, Hierosolyma! if I forget thee,
May my right hand in oblivion lie!
And my tongue to my jaws cleave, if I prefer not
Thee and thy glory before my chief joy!

Be mindful, O Lord, of the children of Edom,
In Jerusalem's day, who of Zion have said,
"Let her be empty, and wasted continually
To her foundations, and counted as dead!"

Woe unto thee, wretched daughter of Babylon!
Blest shall he be who shall give back to thee
The stern retribution with which *we* are visited;
Who dashes thy young on the stone, O, blest he!

WHEN I THE LIGHT SHALL LEAVE.

When I the light shall leave
  Of earth's pale shore,
When life's swift shuttles weave
  This web of life no more—
Where shall I go? O, where?
Shall I to bliss repair,
Or night, and blank despair,
  And hopeless woe?

Shall I change then for aye
  The heaven's blue,
Green field, and blithesome day,
  And every hue
That spring and summer's sun
Makes, and then smiles upon,
For some dim place where none
  Loves what is true?

Ah! when I pass from earth,
  And earth's delight;
When all my pretty ones
  Fade from my sight,
Shall no sweet thought sustain
My soul in that dire pain,
That we shall meet again
  In love and light?

O, Jesus! Thou hast breathed
Our mortal air;
The grass was green to Thee,
The lily fair;
And Thou dost love as none
Can do, or e'er has done;
All things beneath the sun
Are still Thy care.

The bitterness of death
Was also Thine;
Unfathomable love,
O, Lord Divine!
What thou hast made, O keep!
From that mysterious sleep
Let me not wake to weep,
Dear Saviour mine!

A CHINESE FABLE.

A pious hermit overta'en by sleep,
Kept nodding in the middle of his prayers,
His leaden lids he open could not keep
Tho' startled sometimes, falling unawares.
In holy wrath against the weary flesh
He cut his eyelids off, and earthward threw
Those curtains to the windows of his soul,
When lo! up from the very spot the tea-shrub grew.
Bordered with lashes—like the offending parts—
Its tender leaves unfolded bearing free
A mystic draught for drowsy heads and hearts.
Refill the cups! and thank his piety.

REST AND PRAY.

Autumn slowly steals upon us;
Over hills and vales and streams
Green is turned to gold and crimson,
And the landscape seems like dreams
Filled with drowsy mists and vagueness,
Chequered by the richest gleams.

Swiftly, slowly, never pausing,
How the gorgeous vision sweeps
All the chords and tones of color
From the green and purple deeps
To the palest flame that, lamp-like,
Trembles on the rocky steeps.

Soon the leaves their blush and paleness
Will exchange for faded brown,
Like the habit of Saint Francis;
And the gemmed and starry crown
Of Queen Nature, Indian Summer
In its smoky haze will drown.

Like the Scottish soldier flinging
Ere the fight his plaid aside,
Soon the trees will shed their foliage,
Winter's stormy blasts to bide,
And beneath a cheerless mantle
Earth her priceless treasures hide.

Autumn slowly steals upon us,
Spring-tide visions fade away;
O'er our brains and through our bosoms
Floats the dim and dusky gray
Of the twilight and the evening—
'Tis the hour to rest and pray.

PEACE.

As fades a cloud upon the blue,
When summer skies are fair and still,
As dies a ripple on the deep,
Or early snowflake on the stream,
So ceased her breath upon the air,
As if 't were better not to breathe.

Her hair, a golden shower, unbound,
Strayed o'er her white and stainless breast;
One, like the sweet fire of her love,
The other, like her chastity;
And her thin hand lay near her heart,
As if still mindful what it held.

Still mindful—though no more to move—
That in its prison bars so pale
The paler image of her Love
Lay there in sculptured ivory;
That so her last faint wave of life
Might die against His bleeding feet.

Sweet picture of supreme repose!
Frail barque! the harbor now is gained;
The freight is landed, and thy sails,
White with the bleaching storm, may hang
All motionless against the mast—
The winds can never stir them more!

HEAVEN.

[IN IMITATION OF GOETHE'S "MIGNON."]

Know'st thou the land? There flowers eternal bloom,
And fruits unknown on earth exhale perfume;
Unfading light illumes unfading eyes,
And songs of gladness from all hearts arise.
Say, dost thou know it?
There, with thee,
O my beloved one, would that I could flee!

Know'st thou the house? Bright are its pillared halls,
Its floors are pearl; and from its crystal walls
Angels, with radiant pinions, as they see
Thee enter, say, "Saved one, we welcome thee."
Say, dost thou know it?
There, with thee,
O my beloved one, would that I could flee!

Know'st thou the mountain crowned with amethyst?
Upon its God-lit sides the weary rest;
There Beauty, Truth and Love immortal reign,
And thy lost Eden is renewed again!
Say, dost thou know it?
O, with thee,
And those my heart loves, would that I could flee!

HOPELESS LOVE.

A captive, gazing at the azure sky,
Through the small square formed by his dungeon grate,
Watching to see the bird he loves fly o'er,
Portrays my fate.

A man with blackened lips, and parching tongue,
Who sees, beyond his reach, though bubbling nigh,
A spring, with budded violets round the brim—
Like him am I.

A drowning seaman, struggling in the deep,
Who sees a vine-clad island smiling near,
Yet hath no hope of reaching, ere he die—
So I am, here.

Dearer the smile upon thy glowing lip,
Dearer by far, though never meant for me,
Than limpid spring to thirst; or to the slave
Sweet liberty.

My heart, like pilgrim to forbidden shrine,
At distance worships; and fans secretly
Its ever-burning fires for thee in vain—
In vain for thee!

Dark and unknown, as is the bedded pearl,
And Time, the diver, ne'er can bring to view
How much of silent, hidden, hopeless love,
It spends on you.

EVENING.

Purple, and crimson, and gold,
Fainting and fading away,
Calm, yet in haste, like a beautiful dream,
Or a swan on the stream,
The bright glories of day,
Ere the beauty is penciled or told,
Sinks into gray,
Fainting and fading in twilight away.

Linger! O, cease not to shine!
Leave me the light of her eyes!
Stay, till I gaze on her beautiful cheek,
And her forehead so meek,
And her lips, where love lies,
And the passion of pity divine!
Vain are my sighs—
Loveliness fades into twilight, and dies.

ANTI-SOCIALISM.

My shadow falls between my feet,
The sun is hot, the weeds are thick;
And I must toil through scorching heat
All day, be I or well or sick.
How cool is now yon fragrant bower
Where master with his book reclines,
And wiles away the lazy hour
Beneath the shadow of the vines.

For him the purple clusters grow,
For him to ruddy wine they change,
That he may set his heart aglow.
The providence of God is strange!

Be hushed, my soul! nor let one stain
Of envy in my bosom rest;
Nor let me of my lot complain,
For He is just who knows us best.

Peace dwells beneath my humble roof,
My sleep is sound till morning dawns;
Unholy things God keeps aloof,
And shields my doe and all her fawns.

My labor sweetens common food,
My poverty doth banish fear;
My hope is in the holy Rood—
Our lasting city is not here.

Then let me cut the weeds away—
Those, too, that spring within my heart;
If I knew all, no doubt I'd say:
"To each is given the fitting part."

TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

I.

Daughter of God! Bride of the Holy Breath!
Sole Virgin Mother of the Eternal Son!
Over whose beauty incorruptible the spectre Death
No victory has won;
To Thee my soul in wonder lifts her eyes,
Then, dazzled, bows,
And whispers, "Hear our cries!"

Hear us, O purest Maid! whose Maker deigns
To wear the vesture of Humanity,
From Thy chaste being woven! Folded by thy crimson veins,
Immortal Love in thee
Espoused our mortal life, our souls to save
For heaven above,
From hell's deep yawning grave!

O, radiant, priceless Jewel of our race!
Alone found worthy in thy breast to bear
The One True God, who made, sustains, and rules all time, all space!
What blinded mortal dare
Aspire to heaven, and will not ask the way
Of her who brought
Heaven down to human clay!

Most pure Conception! through Time's riven veil
The pale-mouthed prophet saw, and joyful cried:
"Behold, a Virgin shall bring forth a Son, Emmanuel!"
And now, the Serpent's pride
He 'neath his heel has crushed, O, joy! and raised
Our fainting state;
His name and Thine be praised!

Terror of hell! the wicked scream with fear,
And hide them from thy virgin loveliness,
More than of old from lightning-pointed archangelic
spear!
While little children press
To heap thy altars, and thy lap to fill
With flowers and leaves
Gathered from vale and hill!

II.

Woman Sublime! who, with thy milk-white hand,
Hast lifted mother, daughter, sister, wife,
Into that higher realm of equal love, whose holy band
Binds our frail mortal life
With flowers of love divine!
O, still sustain us, lest we faint and fail
And faithlessly repine!

Rebellious Life our self-willed Eva gave,
But from Archangel's lips the "Ave" came,
And from thy bosom's Truth, Obedient Love, O,
Mother brave!
Lit all the world with flame.
Ah, may that sacred fire
My heart and spirit permeate and fill,
Till time in love expire!

All generations call thee blessed. Yea,
And blest are we who bless thee evermore!
From thee our everlasting comfort springs, to thee we
pray—
Thy womb's dear Fruit adore,
And hail the Living Ark
Who bore the Dove with olive branch of peace
Above the waters dark!

Hail, Mary! Mother of Our God and King!
Clothed with the Sun, the Moon beneath thy feet—
O, beauteous feet that o'er the mountains best of tidings
bring,
Holy, and true, and sweet!
O, Virgin full of Grace!
O, Queen of Mercy! pray for us that we
In heaven may see thy face!

Jesus is with thee. He, the One True Vine,
Whose trellis was the Cross, whose wine the Blood
That cheers his virgins with the ruby glow of love
benign!
O, by that Holy Rood!
Pray for us all to Him,
The sceptre of whose pity thou dost hold
Above the Seraphim.

III.

Gem of the universe! the brightest flower
That on the tropic-girdle of our sphere
Has ever ope'd its bosom to the dew and pearly shower
Grows pale and dim and sere
Beside thy peerless name;
In thee, O Mystic Rose! O Lily Pure!
Blossom and Bud endure!

O, by thy joy, which angels cannot know!
O, by thy sorrow, deep as love in death!
O, by thy glory, unimaginable here below!
And by the blessed Faith
That leads to Christ Our Lord,
Plead, with those azure pools of love divine,
For this fair land of thine!

This land, so mighty in its opulence,
And in its breed of men who know not fear;
This world, through peril sought and found for Christ's
dear sake—and hence
To thy soul ever dear—
Shall, by thy powerful aid,
Arise in faith and do such deeds for God
As make old records fade.

See! Nature sprinkles o'er its meadows wide
White lilies for thy altars of the May!
Devoted hearts bring branches green from rugged moun-
tain side,
And bud, and bloom, and spray,
Sweet gifts from florist's hand,
Deck the blithe churches where our hymns arise
To thee in Paradise!

Daughter of God! Spouse of the Holy Ghost!
Sole Virgin Mother of the Eternal Son!
Over whose beauty incorruptible sin cannot boast
Trophy or triumph won—
Accept my tuneless voice!
Help, stainless One! that I may weep and mourn,
And in thy joy rejoice!

GOOD NIGHT.

Our native cactus closes
Its hundred chalices,
Where wasps and wild bees hold their revellings
(With sheathed stings),
In nectar hid in gold.
Another morning brings
New blossoms for one day,
Rich palaces
For tiny insect life as frail as they.

The ruby-throated humming bird, that swings
Like a swift pendulum
Above his hidden mate, has flown away;
And all the songsters of the day are dumb.

By love grown bold
Our constant summer guest,
The little pewee bird, reposes
Under the door-porch on her last year's nest,
By vine leaves screened.
Her name has told
The simple song she sings.

With all her wealth, four soft brown little ones,
(Two daughters and two sons),
Secure within the shelter of her wings
The patient peahen cowers in her coop,
Her Rajah with his splendid train adroop,
All smoothed and preened
And jeweled o'er with sapphire eyes
(When the emerald dies),
From his high perch above the streamlet blue,
Like guardian true,
Screams harsh his all well "Pavo!" thro' the air.

And there,
As fades the soft and dreamy light,
My dear one comes and says, "Good night!"
Good night!

THE STRONG MAN.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

STRONG MAN.

HERMIT.

INFANT CHRIST.

PRINCE.

EMPEROR.

SATAN.

HARPER.

NINA.

TRAVELERS, COURTIERS, SOLDIERS, ETC.

THE STRONG MAN.

SCENE I.

CAVE ON THE SIDE OF A MOUNTAIN.

HERMIT (*kneeling*).

And last, O Lord of heaven and earth and sea,
Give me the grace to accept of Thy grace!

(*Rises and comes forward.*)

The day is dawning and my prayer is prayed.
Once every morning when the dew is bright,
I speak aloud that I may hear again
The sound of my own voice. This solitude,
Far from the turmoil of the feverish world,
Is calm and beautiful and dear to me.
Sometimes I partly spell a mystic verse
All light and music, which, if but pronounced,
Would cure mankind of all their misery—
But ere my tongue can move, the letters fade.
Sometimes my soul seems as if entering heaven,
And time has slid into eternity,—
But soon by some most poor and pitiful
Necessity of mortal life drawn back again.
And sometimes, too, I'm lone and desolate
When all this mountain side is wrapt in mist,
And earth and sky are hidden from my view.

(*Puts his ear to the ground.*)

I hear a human footstep on the ground!

Young, strong and energetic he must be,
For he has left the road that winds around,
And climbs straight up the mountain by the spring.
Some grapes have turned to raisins on the vine;
These will I bring that I may see him eat. (*Exit.*)

ENTER STRONG MAN.

Just here about I heard a human voice,
And sure I must be near the Hermit's cave:
I saw the walnut trees that give him nuts,
I saw the vines that give him luscious grapes,
I saw the crystal spring that is his well,
And, there! that is the rock that is his cell.
Hillo! My father! do you hear me call?

HERMIT (*entering*).

Good day, my son! what brings you up so high?
You like to snuff this bracing mountain air
And gaze upon these valleys far below?

STRONG MAN.

Father, I like to climb, and I am strong,
But when I am on high what can I do?
The eagle floats about above my head,
The wild gazelle leaps from the rocky ledge;
They need no help from me, nor I from them.
I wonder how a man like you can live
In such a dreadful solitude as this,
So far from human life, and keep your wits.

HERMIT.

So far from human *strife* I live, my son;
And whether I have kept my wits or no
I may not say. It has been said, indeed,
That for a man to live alone he will
Either an angel or a devil be:
But here I prove that I am human still
By bringing you some grapes dried in the sun,
And figs and chestnuts,—you will eat and like them.

STRONG MAN.

I thank you! I am hungry; these are good.

HERMIT.

Now I rejoice to see you relish them,
And plenty more are hanging on the vines:
In a few minutes I will come again. (*Exit.*)

STRONG MAN.

I doubt this old man cannot tell me much
How I may find the mightiest Emperor;
So far from prince and peasant does he live
He little knows of either; yet, how kind
His words are, and how peaceful is his eye!

(*Re-enter Hermit.*)

I thank you, father, I must take no more;
On these you live, and I have here enough.
This is my errand: I have heard that you
Are much revered through all the valleys 'round

For giving wisest counsel; now I wish
To serve the greatest monarch on the earth:
Where shall I find him? east, or west, or where?

HERMIT.

Say *best* and greatest in the universe!
Then I can tell you: Him *I* try to serve.

STRONG MAN.

How can that be, when here you dwell alone?
Where is the prince you serve? Lead me to him!

HERMIT.

My Son, He suffered death upon a cross,
Nailed through his hands and feet by wicked men.

STRONG MAN.

Dead, is he then? I do not serve the dead:
Had he been strongest he would not have died,
But put his enemies in chains for life:
Him whom I cannot see I cannot serve.
Farewell, kind Father! If this lonely life
Has done so much to shake your stronger mind,
Were I to stay long I should go stark mad. (*Going.*)

HERMIT.

Farewell, my son! When you have found your chief
Come up again and tell me! Fare you well!
An honest soul, though now a little dark.
O Best and Greatest! Savior of the world!
By Thy sweet grace, or powerful providence,
Lead him to find the Greatest and the Best!

SCENE II.

PRINCE AND HIS COUNCILORS—(*Strong Man as guard at the door.*)

PRINCE.

We are cooped up in this small territory.
My principality is far too small:
And more, we want an outlet on the sea.
That sweep of country to the river's mouth,
With vineyards clothed and forests on the hills,
And fertile valleys, where the golden grain
In such abundance grows—'twould feed us all;
Added to this, would make a perfect princedom.
This I desire—but, oh! that emperor,
For every spear we have, has seventy-five:
His government is strong and gentle, too,
And all his people love and reverence him,
And so would fight against us to the death:
Is there one can hatch a plan to plunder him?

COUNCILOR.

My prince, permit me to suggest a way
To gain that province fairly without fighting.
Supply some cunning men with gold and falsehood,
And send them there to teach ingratitude
To him who is the prince; drum in their ears
That he is tyrant, but if you were lord
Each would have thrice the land which now he has,
And for a hundred years to come no taxes!

PRINCE.

A capital scheme! Come to my closet, friends,
And let us hatch this plan and trick it out
With plumage of the bird of paradise,
So that even good men will believe it just.

(*Exeunt Prince, etc.*)

STRONG MAN.

Much that I hear I do not understand,
But this I see: Our prince is weak and bad;
He is afraid of him called "emperor,"
And yet would steal his province without fighting,
Cheating his people with his lies and gold.
Relieved from guard, I march myself away
And ask no leave to go: O who would stay
And lend himself to such iniquity?

COUNCILOR (*re-entering*).

You came here, friend, upon a lucky time;
I like your honest look and wish you well.
You when relieved from guard come straight to me;
Our prince desires to send you, with some others,
Into the country of the emperor
To do a very splendid piece of work
For which I must instruct you. (*Exit.*)

STRONG MAN.

I will come!—
And yet I know I shall not do your work,
But with my fellows I will travel there,
For by myself I might not find the way.
None but the greatest shall my master be!

SCENE III.

EMPEROR (*and others drinking.*)

Pour out the wine, let every cup be filled!
And we will drink in gladness that our foes
Are, not by us, but by themselves, defeated.
They set the snare, and in it they were caught;
They dug the ditch and darkling fell into it.
Bring in the minstrel, let him sing the story!
Wine for the minstrel, so to clear his throat,
And, old man, pluck thy harpstrings to thy voice!

HARPER.

What shall I play to please his majesty?

EMPEROR.

The newest story, where no drop of blood
Was lost by us, and yet the victory
Was ours.

HARPER.

Yes! I will try, although I fear my voice
And heart and harp are sadly out of tune.

Song.

Fierce invaders from afar
In their galleys o'er the waves,
Landed on our sacred shores,
Thinking soon to make us slaves.
But around our emperor
Gathered swift the shining spears,
Ordered well and well restrained
Till the dawning light appears.
Lucifer, the prince of lies,

(*Emperor makes sign of the cross.*)

Cast his mantle on the moon.
"Courage!" then their leaders cried,
"We will be victorious soon."
In the trenches they had made,
To entrap our soldiers brave,
By that dread eclipse betrayed,
Stumbled, floundered, found a grave.
Panic-stricken in the dark,
All that could fled to their ships,
Cursing as they sailed away
The devil and the moon's eclipse.

(*Makes sign of the cross.*)

Glory be where it is due,
Honor to the emperor,
Honor to the brave and true,
Glory to our emperor.

(*They drink and shout.*)

STRONG MAN (*as Minstrel passes*).
Why did our mighty sovereign seem afraid
Of that great prince who blotted out the moon?

HARPER.

Because he is more powerful than himself.
He can put out the lights and move unseen,
And swiftly, to and fro upon the earth;
In every country, too, he has a name;
In every country, too, he has a band;

Some call him Lucifer, the Morning Star,
Some Satan and some Devil, some Auld Cloots:
He has more power than any earthly king,
And sometimes kings and princes are his vassals. (*Exit.*)

STRONG MAN.

So, of this Lucifer he is afraid!
I shall not serve the prince who is afraid
Of any other mortal man on earth.
This Satan, Devil, Lucifer, Auld Cloots—
(Cloots is a funny name for prince or king)—
How shall I find the country where he lives?

ENTER SATAN (*as a fellow soldier*).

Comrade, I know the way to Devil's land,
And shall set out tomorrow for that same;
I weary of this life so tame and flat,
Whining in fear and sighing still for peace,
And prating about virtue all the day;
Meet me an hour before the sun is up,
Under the cypresses outside the gate,
And we will march together. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE IV.

DAY DAWN.

SATAN (*with soldiers marching*).

Thus far we march along in triumph, friends!
But we have sped so swiftly o'er the ground

That the main body of our valiant troop
Lags far behind. Here let us halt a while!

(*Satan turns around and cowers in fear.*)

STRONG MAN.

How now, brave captain! what's the matter now?

SATAN.

Only a military exercise
To keep the dawning light out of our faces.
And let me re-assure you, brave companions,
That all goes well; for if this way is barred
By any evidence of past defeat,
Which might demoralize our raw recruits,
I have another plan, another route,
And after that, another, and another!
Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!
These are the splendid watchwords that commend
Themselves to every man of sense and justice.
Break down the walls and burn the hedges up,
Obliterate the boundaries, and then
If there's no paling how can there be trespass?
This is the liberty I promise you.
Equality is even a finer word;
For why should one be king, and millions beggars,
When every one of right should be a king?
(*Aside*)
And yet, I'm double damned if I can see,
If all were kings, where the subjects would be.
And for Fraternity—the best of all—
All men are brothers, equal born and free.

(*Cowers in fear.*)

Most worthy scout, move forward and find out
If on the roadside stands a monument,
And then return to us!

STRONG MAN.

Captain, I will!—(*Exit.*)

SATAN.

This simpleton suspects we are not good,
Yet has not wit to fathom our design;
Tickle his pride that he is strong and brave,
Then use the elephant. Well! brave and wise,

(*Re-enter Strong Man.*)

What thou hast seen, or heard, or smelt—declare!

STRONG MAN.

Most powerful leader, all I saw was this:
A woman on her knees before a stone.
The structure seems quite new and wonderful:
The figure of a man with outstretched arms
Is carved upon a tree—but all of stone.
I asked the woman what the trophy meant:
She answered, "Jesus Christ, the Crucified!"

(*Here Satan and his troops fall on their faces and go out on their hands and feet.*)

STRONG MAN (*in astonishment*).

Why, they are beasts, and cowardly—not men!
This name of power has scarcely passed my lips,
When lo! they groveling run away like beasts!
Satan! I serve no more such hounds as you,
Who, terror-stricken, flee before a name!
This banner, black or white as it may be,
This blasted helmet, too, go after you (*flings them*);
I will not wear such livery any more.
No! I will travel yet until I find
This prince, whose name can make an army flee:
I give my strength to him—him will I serve!

(*Nina enters, with a bundle, but, seeing the foot-prints of Satan, she starts back and falls down. Strong man puts her bundle under her head, goes out, and returns with his hands full of water and sprinkles her face.*)

This is the woman that I saw before,
Kneeling beside the curious monument.
How beautiful she is! and she is dead.
I would give half my strength so she might live.

(*Kisses her.*)

NINA (*Recovering*).

Your lips have given me life! kiss me again!
Now let me rest; O, me! how tired I am!

STRONG MAN.

I will fetch water for you in a leaf.

NINA.

No, no, you must not leave me here alone!
Or I shall die again, and no one near.
These frightful foot-prints in the clay so near us!
The suffocating stench has made me faint;
I cannot climb the mountain with this bread;
O, that I were at home—and you with me!

STRONG MAN.

That is a simple wish: I'll carry you
Day after day, as mothers do their babes:
Your little bundle goes upon my back,
And you upon my breast to balance it.
There! clasp your hands around my neck—yes, so!
How light you are! Now, which way lies your home?

NINA.

Straight on, and past the place where first you saw me,
And soon we reach the village where I dwell. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE V.

HERMIT'S CAVE ON THE HILLSIDE.

STRONG MAN (*shouting*).

Hilloa! good father Eremite, come forth!
I wonder if this hermit ever sleeps,
Or eats, or drinks, or laughs, or weeps, or sings!

Of course he eats, for here I bring him bread,
And let me listen! Yes, I hear him singing.

HERMIT (*at a distance, unseen*).

"O, glory be to God on high!
And to His Sole Begotten Son!
The same, O Holy Ghost, to Thee,
While everlasting ages run!"

HERMIT (*entering*).

O ho, my son! Whence come you? from the clouds?
Or from the far off corners of the earth?
In Egypt, or Assyria, did you find
The thrice-renowned and mighty conqueror?
Come, tell me about your powerful prince!

STRONG MAN.

Good father, do not mock me! I have brought
Up from the valley this good loaf of bread:
Not from a prince, but princess, as I think—
A woman that appears to have the power
To die and live as often as she pleases.

HERMIT.

How often has she died that you have seen?

STRONG MAN.

Twice only—but I have not seen her long.

HERMIT.

I thought a mortal only *once* could die.
How did she come to life? What is her name?

STRONG MAN.

Her name is Nina; she has great black eyes:
I kissed her cheek and then she came to life.
Then to her cottage home I carried her,
And now she sends me with this lump of bread.

HERMIT.

Worker of miracles! what have you done?
You said you would not serve the weak and dead:
And now you stoop to kiss and carry home
A poor weak maiden with your giant strength!

STRONG MAN.

What could I do? She said that I must kiss her.

HERMIT.

She spoke when dead, then, did she? Simple man!

STRONG MAN.

Father, your words confuse me; she is kind,
Tho' soft and weak.

HERMIT.

Well, tell me of your prince!

STRONG MAN.

I have not found him whom I wish to find,
Tho' as a soldier I have served the great.

The prince I first found was a greedy thief,
And I exchanged him for an emperor:
He was renowned and powerful, they said,
But as his minstrel sang to him and named
A certain Lucifer, the prince of Hell,
The Emperor would make this curious stroke
Upon his body and seem much afraid.

(*Makes sign of the cross.*)

I then determined Lucifer should be
The mighty leader I would henceforth serve.
He raised a numerous army in one night,
And on we marched to free the world from wrong;
But at the dawn of day he stopped and shook,
And could not bear the sunshine on his face:
I bore his banner, which was black and white—
The white side served us as a flag of truce,—
And, as a scout, he sent me on before
To see if there were enemies in front.
I, marching forward, very soon beheld
This Nina kneeling near an upright stone,
On which was carved the figure of a man:
And when I told him he had naught to fear,
'Twas but an image of one "Jesus Christ,"
They fell, and groveling on the ground like beasts,
Fled on all fours away! He is a cheat.
I've wandered over many lands and found not
The just all-conquering chief that I would serve;
I am discouraged and I am confused.

HERMIT.

My son, the chairs of earthly chiefs and kings
Are seldom filled by men both good and great,
And at this present time confusion reigns:
Tribe against tribe and kingdom against kingdom,
And force and fraud and wrong 'twixt man and man.
But One in heaven whose Son this Jesus is,
He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
His empire is the universe,—the stars,
The earth, the sun, the moon are His; and men
Are His beloved children; Him you serve,
For He it is who gives you all your strength.

STRONG MAN.

What must I do to serve this King of Kings?

HERMIT.

First, you must be instructed and baptized,
Receiving faith that Jesus Christ is God;
And that He died for love of all mankind,
Yet lives in blessedness forevermore:
And that the good who try to serve Him well
Will, when they die on earth, ascend to Him
And live with him forever. But, while here,
Sometimes you have to watch and weep and pray.

STRONG MAN.

I know not how to pray, I cannot pray;
And as for watching, what is there to watch?
If He is Lord of Lords, I'll carry Him

Upon my shoulders over rocky mountains,
Wade thro' great rivers and thro' sandy plains.
But pray I cannot. What else might I do?

HERMIT.

Sometimes you must not eat when you are hungry,
Even if the finest food is placed before you!

STRONG MAN.

Hold, hold, good father! this will never do:
Fasting is worse than praying, as I take it;
Fasting would take my strength away, you see,
For when I'm hungry I am weak as water.
If this great Lord has given me strength and health,
Why, I must keep what He has given to me:
I will not fast, and there's an end of that!
Against my will I often had to fast,
And then it seemed a wolf was at my throat.

HERMIT.

Well, well, my son! your work will be a prayer;
And those who work hard do not need to fast.
Go, build a hut near yonder shining river!
Get a strong staff, and when men wish to cross,
Carry them over to the other side;
And when you place them safely on their feet,
Say with a loud voice, "Praised be Jesus Christ!"

STRONG MAN.

And if I ferry Lucifer across,

I'll say it in the middle of the stream,
To see him sprawl and splutter in the water!

HERMIT.

He is the enemy of God and man,
And would destroy us all were he permitted;
He half deceived you once, trust him no more;
He is a spirit, and through earth can pass,
And like a vulture in the air can soar;
Even in the stream the devil would not drown.

STRONG MAN.

And I may carry Nina, may I not?

HERMIT.

She is my daughter, and she will not hurt you;
She will be kind to you, and you to her.
True love of woman is true love of man,
True love of mankind is true love of God,—
And truest service springs from truest love.
Descend, my son! the valleys are in shade,
Tho' light is yet upon the mountain tops:
Come up again and tell me what you do!

STRONG MAN.

The air is pleasant on the mountain side;
This night, upon the highest pinnacle
I wish to sleep, and in the morning see
The sun arise and hear the eagles scream. (*Exit.*)

HERMIT.

And so it is: her eyes have touched his heart,
As long ago her mother's touched my own:
And this is what is still ordained by heaven
O'er all this fair and fruitful earth of ours,
Unless I love my father or my mother,
Unless I love my sister or my brother,
Bride, child, or friend,—the love of God can never
Enter my human breast! In vain I seek
In single selfishness my own salvation,
Until I wish another to be saved!
Love is the first, the best, the highest teacher;
From him we do not love, we do not learn;
From him we love, we cannot help but learn;
Our wisdom is the measure of our love!

SCENE VI.

A RIVER BANK.

STRONG MAN (*with a woman on his back, and sets her down*).

There! now you are over—praised be Jesus Christ!

OLD WOMAN.

Can you not carry me farther, my good man?

STRONG MAN.

I could, but will not. (*Exit.*)

OLD WOMAN.

What an ill-bred knave!
More like a dromedary than a man;
And he so strong, and I so old and feeble.
I saw him carry one along the road;
Had I been younger he would not refuse;
And yet I'm not so old—just twenty-three,
And some months more not worth the mentioning.
There is no real kindness in these men;
Nothing but selfishness—all, all for self!
High up the stream I could have crossed without him;
The flood may drown him soon for all I care!
That cunning little minx has wheedled him:
I heard she had a pious fainting fit,
And that he kissed and carried her about,
And squeezed her like a baby to his breast.
Well, well, this world is going to the dogs! (*Exit.*)

STRONG MAN (*re-entering*).

What do you mutter there, you withered hag?
I'm glad she's gone and did not hear my words;
Perhaps she may have dealings with Auld Cloots!
She looked at me as if she wished to bite me,
And yet I had to carry her across.

(*A voice at a distance.*)

Halloo! Giant of Canaan, come and carry me!

STRONG MAN.

Well, there is another shouting, and I go,
To please my Father Hermit.

SCENE VII.

THE SAME.

STRONG MAN (*setting down a man from his back*).
There you are on your feet—praise be to God!

TRAVELER.

What! you seem pious, but you've picked my pocket;
My bag of gold and diamonds, that I tied
Fast to my girdle here, is lost and gone!

STRONG MAN.

I never saw your girdle nor your gold;
I had enough to do to keep my feet.
See, how the leeches hang about my legs!
(*Wiping them off.*)

TRAVELER.

You river-horse! you hippopotamus!
Give me my bag!

STRONG MAN.

O, you ungrateful wretch!
Next time you come I shall not carry you:
I never touched your treasure, if you had one;
And now I have a mind to beat your bones!

TRAVELER.

Robber of travelers, will you murder me?
O, murder, murder! (*Runs out.*)

STRONG MAN.

O, what a thankless labor I pursue!
Not one is grateful out of ten I carry:
And five will swear I let them wet their feet.
Of all I've carried dry and safe across,
And said to each of them, "Praised be Jesus Christ,"
But two have answered, "Yes, forever more!"
And one was Giovanina. (*Exit.*)

NINA (*entering*).

That day he carried me when I was sick,
I felt his great heart beat against my side,
And ever since I am ashamed to speak:
And yet, remembering how the river swelled,
When I was but a child, and swept its banks,
And drowned the people in their beds—I must
Tell him the flood is coming—melted snow
Slips from the mountain's sides and soon will wash
His little hut away—

(*Enter Strong Man.*)

O, my good friend! I wish to tell you something.
This river overflows its banks in summer;
And now 'tis rising fast; you must not stay
All night so near it. To the village yonder,
That stands on higher ground, come for this night.

STRONG MAN.

And did you come all this long way to tell me?
And yet will never repeat those pretty words,—
"Kiss me again?" O, surely I will come!
But something makes me stay till midnight here.

NINA.

I and my father, then, will wait for you;
He came down from his cave to see a sick man.
(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE VIII.

RIVERSIDE—STORM AND DARKNESS.

STRONG MAN.

How dark it is, and how the water roars:
The river rises nearly to my door!
In such a night I hope no one is out
To need my help; I could not keep my feet.
I have been thinking how to build a bridge.

INFANT'S VOICE (*at a distance*).

Come, come, good hearted Canaanite!
  The night is dark, and the stream is wild;
Yet come and carry me over tonight,
  I am a lonely little child!

STRONG MAN.

Hark! through the roaring storm I hear a voice!
It is a child's voice that I think I hear.

CHILD'S VOICE.

The clouds are black and the river is white;
Christophero, carry me over to-night.

STRONG MAN.

I said I would not carry another man:
This voice, for pity's sake, I must obey!
I am taken for some one called Christophero.

INFANT'S VOICE.

Darkness will flee before the light,
Christophero, carry me over to-night!

STRONG MAN.

Three times that is. I cannot be mistaken,
This name, Christophero, is meant for me. (*Exit.*)

SCENE IX.

CHRISTOPHER (*standing in the river with the Child Jesus on his shoulders, all in bright light, and his staff breaking*).

What art thou, child? I cannot bear thee up.
The weight of all the world is on my shoulders!
My strength is weakness—O, we sink, we sink!

THE DIVINE CHILD.

Courage of love, Christophero,
Danger and death can undergo;
With Faith and Hope take back thy might,
We will not cross the river to-night!

ST. CHRISTOPHER.

My Burden, thou art Lord and Christ and God!

(*Enter Hermit and Nina, who kneel, with their faces towards the apparition.*)

THE CURTAIN DROPS.

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